



CARDINAL RICHELIEU.

RICHELIEU

AND THE GROWTH OF FRENCH POWER

BY

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"FRANCE UNDER LOUIS XV."

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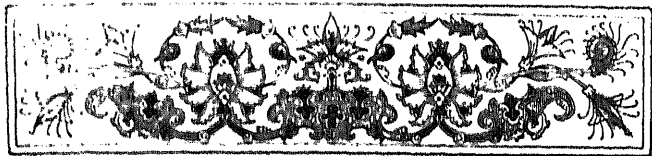
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BY

JAMES BRECK PERKINS

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PREFACE

THE plan of the series to which this Life of Richelieu belongs does not allow any reference to authorities. The present work, however, is based upon an examination of original sources of information, and every effort has been made to secure accuracy, alike in the details of Richelieu's life and as to the nature and results of his administration.

The materials for a study of Richelieu's career are numerous and reasonably complete. His correspondence has been published, and is of the highest value. In addition to this, Richelieu's own *mémoires* are of great importance. They are, indeed, his own statements, and must often be corrected by references to his letters and other documents, but they furnish an account of his career which is for the most part accurate and complete.

I have also examined the MSS. which can be found in the *Affaires Étrangères* at Paris and in the other public offices. So careful, however, has been the study of everything bearing on Richelieu's career that not a great deal of importance now remains unpublished.

Contemporary memoirs are numerous. These vary largely in accuracy and importance, but all are of value as giving different phases of contemporary opinion, even when they are not altogether trustworthy in their statements of occurrences. The *mémoires* of Bassompierre, Pontis, Fontrailles, Turenne, Gaston, Molé, Montresor, Montglat; the *Correspondance de Sourdis*, *Epistolæ Grotii*, *Mercurius François*, *Dispacci Veneziani*, and *Archives Curieuses* are some of the records that can be consulted with profit.

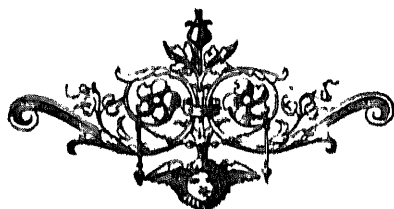
The literature in reference to Richelieu is also very voluminous. The great work of M. Hanotaux, when complete, will contain the most valuable account of Richelieu's life that has appeared. With such diligence and ability has M. Hanotaux studied his subject that his work will remain, I think, the permanent record of the career of the great Cardinal. This Life of Richelieu, when finished, will comprise four large volumes, and its size will perhaps deter the ordinary reader, but it is none too full for anyone who wishes to familiarise himself with French history during the important period covered by Richelieu's administration.

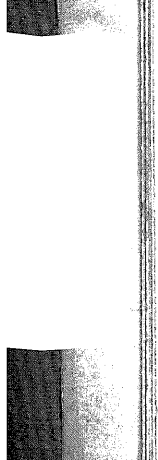
A work of much value in reference to the details of government is *Richelieu et la Monarchie Absolue*, by the Viscount G. d'Avenel. His familiarity with the conditions of the time, both social and political, is based upon an exhaustive study of original documents. One may perhaps disagree with some of the results he reaches, but his researches are a mine of information.

In my *History of France under Mazarin* I gave a review of Richelieu's administration. In writing this *Life of Richelieu* I have been obliged to repeat in substance some things which are found in that work.

JAMES BRECK PERKINS.

ROCHESTER, N. Y., March, 1900.







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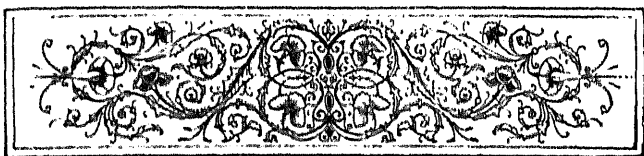
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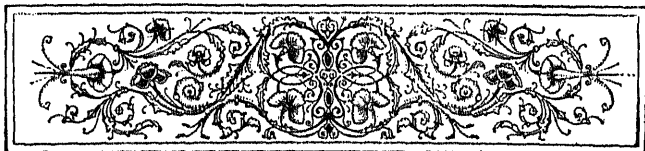
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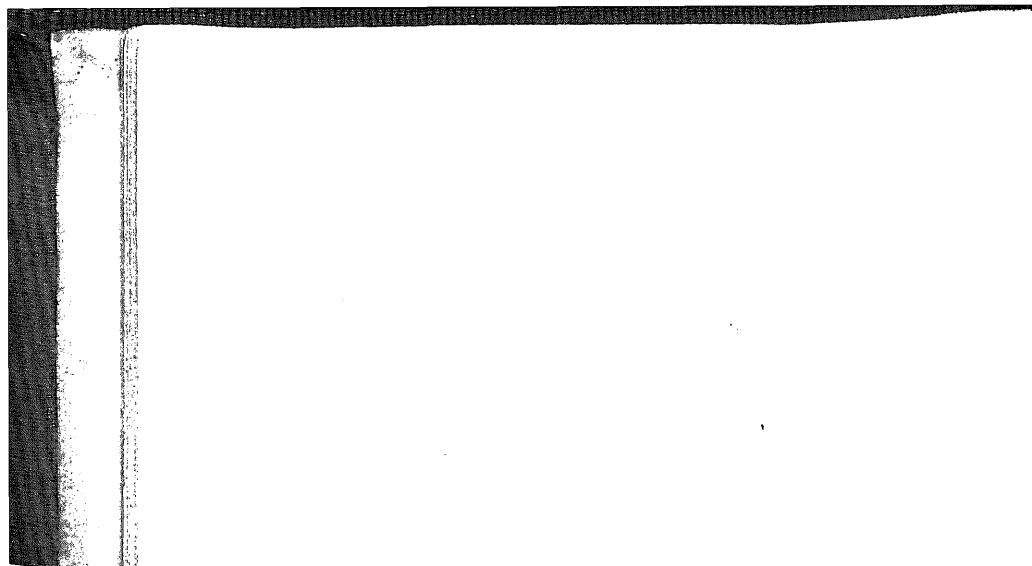
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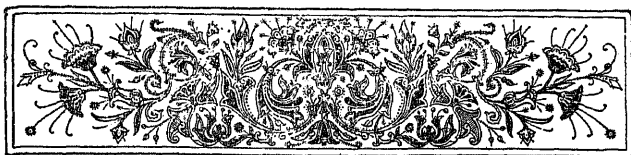
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RICHELIEU

CHAPTER I

FRANCE AS RICHELIEU FOUND IT

NO one would dispute Cardinal Richelieu's right to be regarded as a national hero. In his lifetime he had few friends and many enemies; his rule was harsh, it was not attended with general prosperity, and it was marked by merciless severity. Few loved him and few regretted his decease. The King who maintained him in office regarded him with ill-concealed dislike, the people who suffered under his rule felt for him an unconcealed hatred.

Yet the French people now esteem the Cardinal as one of the greatest of their great men; his fame is cherished because he secured for France glory and power, a paramount influence in European politics, the foremost place among European nations. That he was an extraordinary man was acknowledged in his own day; and now it is seen that his

work left its permanent impress on French government and French history, that it increased the power of the French monarchy and secured for it a position in Europe which it had not before held.

It is not strange, therefore, that the French people should hold in respectful if not in affectionate remembrance a man who helped to make France great. He was merciless to his enemies, but they are forgotten; he did not secure prosperity for the people, but the traditions of past distress do not disturb posterity. There was also in his character and career much that was striking and dramatic. His personality stands out in the pages of history, it has lent itself to romance and the drama; the figure of the Cardinal, clad in the red robes of the Church, inscrutable, implacable, inexorable, is familiar even to those who spend little time in studying the records of the past. In the long list of famous French statesmen, he is the best known.

Before attempting to relate Richelieu's career, it may be well to give a brief sketch of the condition of France and of the French government when an obscure bishop obtained a position in the royal council, and in a few years made himself the actual ruler of the kingdom.

When Armand de Richelieu was born, the kingdom of France was governed by Henry III., the last of the Valois kings. The country was still involved in the wars of religion, which raged during a good part of the sixteenth century. In 1585, the year of Richelieu's birth, Sixtus V. lent a helping

hand to the League by excommunicating Henry of Navarre, and declaring that son of perdition incapable of inheriting the French throne. Four years later, Henry III. was murdered, and Henry IV., the first of the Bourbon line, notwithstanding the papal fulminations, succeeded to the throne of France. He was successful in the field against those who disputed his title, and by adopting the religious profession of the majority of his subjects, he secured the peaceful submission of the entire country. In 1597, by the famous Edict of Nantes, he granted religious toleration to the minority, whose belief he had formerly professed, and the wars of religion were brought to an end.

The administration of Henry IV. was conducted with wisdom and was accompanied by prosperity; France was influential abroad and her people were prosperous at home. It was a period of rapid growth in wealth, attended by an increase in general well-being. Henry was sincere in saying that he wished every French peasant might have a fowl in his pot, and he did much to secure the fulfilment of his desire. But in 1610 the King fell a victim to an assassin's knife, and France was for some years ruled by his widow, an Italian princess of the famous House of the Medici.

The boundaries of France then contained about four-fifths of the territory which they now comprise, even after the disasters of 1870. In the south, Roussillon was still Spanish, Savoy and Nice were Italian, Alsace and Lorraine formed part of the German Empire; Franche-Comté, Artois, and

Flanders, at the east and north, recognised the authority of the King of Spain.

This territory was more sparsely peopled than it is to-day. The population of France was estimated at sixteen millions, and it did not exceed that number. Since then it has more than doubled, though when compared with other European nations of the seventeenth century, the country seemed very populous, and travellers were impressed by the number of its people. Yet great sections that are now fertile land were then the home of wild beasts, or tenanted by a few scattering and half-barbarous occupants; much of the forest by which Gaul was originally covered had been cleared away, but thousands and hundreds of thousands of acres were still timber land. Game of many kinds abounded, not only birds and small game, but deer, wolf, and bear. In the Forest of Ardennes, in the defiles of Auvergne, the hunter could find great sections of land as nature left them, in which wild beasts were more abundant than they now are in any part of the United States.

It was not only the primeval forest, but the primeval swamp that checked cultivation. Vast expanses of low, wet land were still undrained; rivers and streams overflowed, carrying destruction along their shores; the conquest of the soil by man was still far from complete.

The condition of the people varied greatly in different sections: while in some provinces a reasonable prosperity was found, in others extreme poverty was widespread. The peasant's home was usually a mere hut, built of mud and often without windows

or chimney. In it he and his half-naked children lived, often as joint tenants with the family chickens, and the family hog or cow if he was so fortunate as to possess one. The clothing of the people was rough, and their homes were filthy. Meat was rarely eaten, wheat bread was a luxury; black bread, chestnuts, and a few vegetables were the staples of life.

A higher degree of comfort was found in some districts, where decent houses and sufficient, though simple, fare were the lot of most, but the great body of the peasantry lived in such poverty as is now rarely found in civilised lands. Ignorance was almost universal among them; there were few who could read or write. Unless a man went to the wars, his days were spent within a radius of a few miles, with no knowledge of the outside world and no interest in it, occupied only with the sordid problem of getting enough bread to avoid starvation and enough money to pay the tax-gatherer. The only spiritual nourishment was furnished by the parish priest, usually a peasant by birth, and distinguished from his flock by little except the ability to read and write, by familiarity with his breviary, and by a smattering knowledge of Latin. Religious sentiment thus taught might be sincere, but it was not often enlightened.

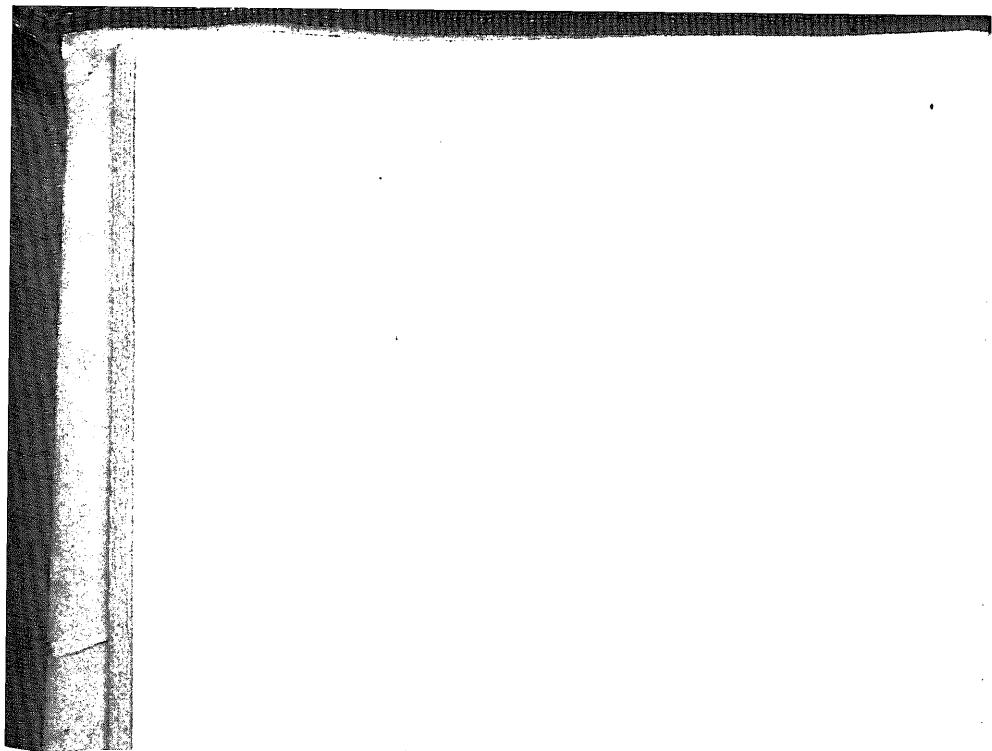
The condition of those living in the towns differed considerably from that of the peasants, and was, on the whole, much better. In our great cities are now found the extremes of vice and misery, while actual need and hunger are infrequent among the tillers of

the soil. There was enough of misery and vice in French cities then, but the state of the citizen was better than that of the countryman. The undue burden of taxation was perhaps the worst feature in the peasant's lot, and in this respect the people of the towns fared better.

If the dwellers in towns escaped the tax-gatherer more easily than their descendants, they had, on the other hand, few of the advantages that render modern cities costly, but also make them healthful and attractive. The material condition of most French cities can well be illustrated by that of the capital. Paris had then a population of half a million; many places of secondary importance now possess more inhabitants, but, at that period, the multitude of persons gathered in this one place was regarded as almost appalling. By edict after edict, it was sought to check the steady growth of the metropolis, but it was no more possible to stop the growth of the city than the rising of the tide. "Our predecessors," said Louis XIII., in an edict of 1627, "seeing that the growth of our good city of Paris was in a high degree injurious, have forbidden building in the faubourgs, and we have repeated these commands." Then follow the statement that such orders were unheeded, and a new prohibition of any further building in the capital, except to replace old with new. Even the local authorities were disturbed, and declared that the growth of population would create many evils, and among other things would render it impossible to remove the filth, or to ferret out criminals.



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF PARIS, EARLY IN 17TH CENTURY. LA CITÉ AND THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE SEINE, LOOKING
SOUTHEAST UP THE RIVER.
FROM AN OLD MAP, BRITISH MUSEUM.



Yet Paris bore little likeness to the great capital of our time. It was still mediæval, and in many respects more resembled the cities of the Orient than a modern town. The streets crossed and diverged in hopeless confusion, as they had been laid out by chance or caprice. Sidewalks and curbs were unknown, sewers and improved roadways were rare; in filth, in lack of sanitary provisions, Paris was almost as bad as Aleppo or Constantinople, and its stenches were famous throughout Europe. "Many of the streets," wrote a traveller, "are the filthiest and the most malodorous that I have seen in any country."

Bad as was the sanitary condition of Paris, that of smaller places was little better. In one town, we find the officials ordering that the bodies of animals which had died of disease should not be left in the streets. "It would be better to throw them into the river," said the vigilant authorities. In this town, as in almost all cities, the river furnished the inhabitants with their drinking-water; it is not strange that the death-rate was higher than it is now.

The highways of Paris were in a condition that seems almost incredible in a great capital. Richelieu's carriage plunged in so deep a mudhole in the Faubourg St. Antoine, in the very heart of the city, that it was tipped over, and the Cardinal, admonished by this accident, after much difficulty raised money for the repair of the road. Money was not freely granted for such purposes. In 1637, the amount spent on the highways of Paris was about one-sixtieth of the sum now annually expended.

In this intricate maze of dark, narrow, and dirty streets thronged a dense population, among whom flourished a liberal proportion of thieves, murderers, and criminals of every class, undisturbed by any pretence of an effective police, and free to act in localities that at night were unlighted save by the lamps the wayfarer carried. No one was allowed to walk in the streets of Paris after nine o'clock without carrying a lantern, in order, said the edict, to prevent the infinite number of robberies committed on those who venture out at night. The cost of lighting Paris under Louis XIII. was nothing, but if the purses of the burghers were spared by the tax-gatherer, they were often taken by the thieves who frequented the city and carried on their trade with comparative impunity.

Only a small part of the population had any instruction from books, but life in a great city is in itself an education. The Parisians were far removed from the brutish stupidity of the peasants, or the dull self-satisfaction of the inhabitants of provincial towns. Even in those days a French ruler could not disregard the wishes or the caprices of the capital.

If the Parisians were not all moral, they were very religious. Paris is now the headquarters of those who would fain do away with all trace of religious belief, but in the days of Richelieu it was Catholic to the core; the League there found its steadiest supporters; Henry IV. attended mass that he might possess in peace his good city of Paris. If some Protestant traveller forgot to kneel as the Holy Sacrament passed through the streets, he was

fortunate to escape with his life. A century later Paris had become liberal, and in another century it had become sceptical, but, under Richelieu, its people were still animated by an intense religious belief; they abhorred heresy and disliked toleration.

The number of clergy at Paris, priests, monks, and friars, was very great, and the city was girdled about by vast tracts of land owned by the various religious orders, whose names are still preserved in the faubourgs of the modern town. The streets swarmed with persons arrayed in religious dress, white, black, grey, and brown; their number was so great as to excite the attention of all travellers. Where the clergy were so numerous, religious buildings multiplied; convents for the monks and churches for the laity abounded in every quarter, and their bells and chimes resounded at all hours, creating, as has been said, an almost unbroken roar of pious thunder.

The difference between the inhabitants of the capital and the provinces has been an important factor in French history, but at this epoch the distinctions between the denizens of different parts of France were far greater than they are now. It was not strange that the inhabitants of remote provinces should differ in speech, dress, and modes of life, for communication between them was attended by difficulty and danger. Henry IV. recognised the importance of good roads in national development, and gave to their improvement more attention than any one of his predecessors. Yet it was but a beginning, and the work was checked at his death. On

many so-called highways, travel by waggon was impossible; in many seasons of the year, it was almost impracticable even for the pedestrian or the horseman. Innumerable are the accounts of the perils of travellers. In approaching the important city of Lyons by the main highway, a German traveller tells us, he found the road so washed by rain that his horse fell into a marsh, and the party advanced on foot in great peril of drowning. Such adventures were constantly encountered, and to the difficulty and danger of travel in bad weather were added perils from highwaymen. Even in the cities the police was imperfect, and a prudent man traversed the street at night with great apprehension for his purse, and some apprehension for his life. In the country, ruffians and thieves practised their arts with still less fear of the constabulary. Travellers went in parties and armed, well pleased if they reached their journey's end without having to exchange shots with highwaymen.

There was comparatively little travel. A peasant would pass his life, hardly going beyond the confines of his native parish. Many, whose means were larger, wandered no farther from home. A few nobles perfected their education by travel in other lands, but the prosperous bourgeois saw no reason why he should waste his money and lessen his comfort by leaving his home. To the average Parisian shopkeeper, an excursion to St. Cloud was not a light affair, a trip to Fontainebleau was a grave and serious undertaking.

When the intercourse between remote sections

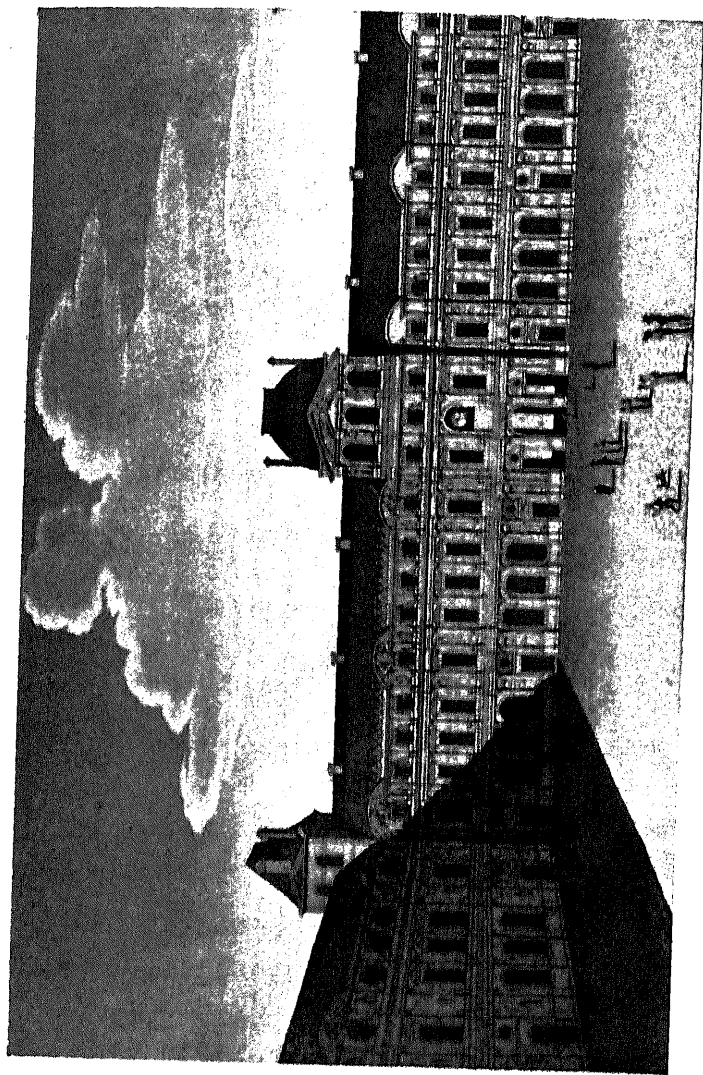
was slight, and newspapers were practically unknown, the life of any locality was isolated, and the political effect of this was considerable. The influence of Paris was less than it has since become, because it was not so closely connected with the rest of France: there were, so to speak, no channels by which impulses from the capital could reach the provinces; the country was like an animal of low organisation,—no nervous centre was closely connected with other parts of the system.

Over all the land, numerous châteaux were scattered. "In France there are too many châteaux," said an ancient proverb, showing the deep-seated dislike to a powerful nobility that was still fresh at the era of the French Revolution. For the most part, these residences belonged to a feudal epoch, and were built for the purpose of defence; there was generally little regard for comfort, for luxury, for conveniences, which are now thought indispensable. The walls were heavy and could defy any weapons of offence until cannon came into use; moat and bridge, turret and portcullis, marked the fortress, and within were provisions for the numerous men-at-arms that the lord might require to defend his home against his enemy. To the ancient portholes, intended for archers, were added new openings where culverins and musketry could be used; the arms had changed, but the warlike purpose of the fortress was unaltered.

With the growth of monarchical authority internal disorder lessened, there was less need of fortifications, and the influence exercised by Italian art

and taste began also to show itself in the homes of the nobility. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, some of the mediæval ruggedness was done away with, gardens were embellished, pavilions erected, the château took on more the air of a residence and had less the appearance of a fortress. This was especially true of Paris. Until a recent period, comparatively few of the nobility had residences in the capital: their lives were spent in their own provinces; their interests, their ambitions, and their strifes were local. A few of the great nobles had headquarters at Paris, usually half-military in their character, and fitted to be places of refuge in times of disturbance. As the power of the King increased and his favour furnished a more tempting field for ambition, many of the nobility were found in attendance on the sovereign; the decline of the feudal system can be measured by the increased attendance of nobles at Court. When tranquillity was assured under Henry IV., its effects were soon seen in the architecture of Paris. New and magnificent residences, intended for peace and not for war, decorated and adorned with a splendour of which there had been little trace in the past, were erected by wealthy nobles.

A great number of fortified castles were destroyed by Richelieu's order. The measure was judicious, although its importance has been somewhat overestimated. These feudal fortresses had been impregnable against bands of unruly peasants, they had been formidable against men-at-arms provided with crossbows and battle-axes; but an army supplied



THE OLD LOUVRE.
FROM AN OLD PRINT.

with cannon could, in a few hours, batter down the walls of a castle that might once have withstood a lengthy siege. They were the relics of a past age rather than important features of the present age. Richelieu might have allowed them to stand until they fell from decay or were torn down to suit new demands of fashion, without fearing any effective resistance to the royal authority. Still, the destruction of fortresses scattered through the interior of the country marked the close of an era of internal disorder and private warfare. It was an outward sign that the robber-baron and the noble highwayman had ceased to exist.

It was with political institutions rather than social conditions that Richelieu had to do when he became minister. Important as was his influence on the development of the French monarchy, he was no innovator,—he followed political traditions which had already taken deep root. The tendency of French growth had long been to strengthen monarchical power, and the great nobles, who once regarded the heirs of Hugh Capet as only first among equals, at last yielded obedience to the King of France. The independent power of the nobility waned with the decline of the feudal system, but the authority of the monarch varied with the ruler and the condition of the realm: there was order under a strong king, and insubordination under a weak king. In the disastrous era of the English wars, any central authority was at times unknown; in the sixteenth century, the wars of religion divided France on new lines, and it required the ability and good judgment

of Henry IV. to render the influence of the King again paramount.

The overthrow of the feudal aristocracy was an unmixed good, for the unruly power of turbulent nobles exerted no valuable restraint on the monarchy. It was rarely used except for private ends, nobles fought for their own privileges and their own advancement, and none of them sought to become popular leaders or to obtain for the people any larger measure of self-government.

But there were other checks on the central power which might have become institutions of value if they had been judiciously developed. Though no legislative body resembled in its constitution the English Parliament, the States-General, chosen to represent the three orders of the community, had at times been an important factor in political life; their sessions had been comparatively frequent in the sixteenth century, and it was as a member of that body that Richelieu first came into public notice.

* So, also, in many of the provinces, the States still possessed a considerable degree of authority, not only in questions of local interest, but in their relations with the central Government. Many cities enjoyed special privileges; the courts, and especially the Parliament of Paris, endeavoured to use the right of registration, which was required for the validity of royal edicts, as an excuse for advising, and as a means of checking, the King. While there existed no regular and recognised check upon the royal authority, yet it was by no means possible for

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the King to direct the State according to his own pleasure; he met on every side privileges granted by his predecessors which could not be lightly swept away, local institutions whose preservation had been guarded by the acts which united the provinces, where they existed, with the French kingdom, and a vast body of usages and customary law which regulated the rights and liabilities of the inhabitants of different parts of the country.

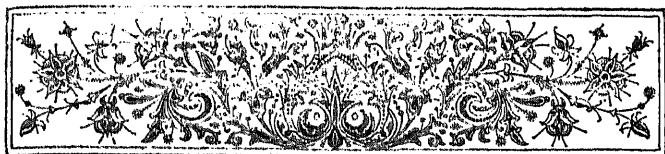
The provinces which formed the French monarchy were irregularly bound together, and the administrative system was not far removed from the mediæval confusion of the feudal ages. Prompt action by the Government was often impossible, the national resources could not be rendered efficient, and, as a result, the influence of France in European politics was not proportionate to her wealth or her population. The kingdom had played a varying rôle in foreign politics: at times French kings had taken an active part in the affairs of the continent, and again France had been of hardly more importance than Poland. In the sixteenth century, the wars of religion so distracted the land that the influence of the country outside of its own boundaries was small indeed. Henry IV. restored order; he was an able and ambitious sovereign, and desired that France should be a leader in the questions that were agitating Europe. Abandoning Italy, where French blood and treasure had often been wasted, Henry sought to exert an active influence in Germany, and he endeavoured in every way to check the dangerous power of Spain.

After his death, there came a complete change in policy. Mary de' Medici wished to unite the fortunes of France with those of Spain: she married her son to a Spanish princess and her daughter to a Spanish prince, her desire would have been to espouse the cause of Catholicism in the contest that was soon to begin in Germany, and to follow the leadership of Spain, the most Catholic and also the most retrograde of the great Powers of Europe.

While the power of the nobility had waned, a body of great landowners had not yet become a body of courtiers, and in a weak government, such as that of Mary de' Medici, the country was distracted by the ambition and lawlessness of unruly nobles.

Mary de' Medici was regent, and upon her son, Louis XIII., soon devolved the control of the State, but he was an unpromising boy who certainly would never become a great and vigorous king. Unruly elements need fear no severe repression from him, nor was he a man who could weld together the imperfectly connected elements of French administration. It seemed that the Government would be so occupied by troubles at home, that it would be in no condition to attempt any important action abroad. Whether the monarchy would become stronger or weaker after the death of Henry IV., and what part it would take in European politics, were questions that might well have embarrassed a student. But at this time appeared a man of genius and extraordinary force of character, who, for almost twenty years, shaped the destinies of France.

A



CHAPTER II

RICHELIEU'S EARLY CAREER

1585-1617

CARDINAL RICHELIEU was of ancient though not illustrious lineage. His family belonged to the lesser nobility of Poitou; they originally bore the name of du Plessis, and traced their ancestry as far back as the thirteenth century. One Guillaume du Plessis, in the reign of Philip Augustus, is the first of whom we find any record, and even at that period the family held several small estates. As far as any tradition remains, they seem to have been a fighting race, and prone to deeds of cruelty and violence. Such, however, were the customs of the times, and the du Plessis were probably neither better nor worse than most of the petty nobles in an age of disorder.

In the fifteenth century, one of a younger branch married Perrine Clérembault; the child of this union inherited from his mother's family the estate of Richelieu, on which a strong castle had long stood, and took the name of du Plessis de Richelieu.

While the older branches of the du Plessis family sank into provincial obscurity, the Richelieus made their way to a certain prominence. They were good fighters, a hardy and enterprising race, with bold hearts and heavy hands.

In the civil wars of the sixteenth century, we find them taking an active part; they were fierce partisans of the League, and extended no mercy to Huguenots. Antoine du Plessis, called the monk, a great-uncle of the Cardinal, left his name in the annals of the time as a man noted for cruelty, even in a merciless age. The family wished to make a priest of him that he might hold certain benefices. But he fled from the abbey, discarded his gown, and became a soldier. Perhaps as a result of his religious training, he was especially rigorous against heretics; on one occasion, a hundred Huguenots having taken refuge in a church, he butchered them all in cold blood, and he carried fire and pillage wherever he went. At last he was killed in a brawl in Paris,—“a man,” says an historian of the time, “of evil fame and renowned for robberies, plundering, and blasphemy, and moreover a great ruffian . . . who thus met a death appropriate to his life.”

The monk's kinsfolk were men of better reputation, but they were well fitted for the stormy period of the civil wars. These rough warriors, while they did not add largely to their possessions, made considerable progress in the world; they obtained a certain position at the Court, and could hope for some marks of royal favour. In 1542, the grandfather of the future Cardinal married Françoise de Roche-

chouart, a member of a powerful and illustrious family. In some degree she derogated from her family rank by marrying a Richelieu, and the marriage contract displays the difference in position with the somewhat brutal frankness of an age of plain speaking. The father of the bride is described as the "high and mighty Seigneur, Antoine de Rochechouart, Baron of Faldonars, Seigneur of Saint Amand, Seneschal of Toulouse," while the groom is briefly disposed of as "Louis du Plessis, Knight, Seigneur of Richelieu and other possessions."

If the bride had high rank, she had also a bad temper, and apparently she found consolation for a misalliance by making life uncomfortable for her new connexions. She was a woman of a harsh and domineering character, but, however disagreeable to live with, she transmitted to her descendants a vigour, in which, indeed, few of the Richelieus were ever wanting. Her son François signalised his entry into active life by murdering a gentleman, who had himself killed François's older brother as a result of some quarrel over precedence at a church. Murdering a man against whom one had a grievance was not an offence to be strictly inquired into, and ere long we find François a retainer of Henry III., and a favourite of that sovereign. After the King's murder, Richelieu had sufficient sagacity to abandon the lost cause of the League and espouse the fortunes of Henry of Navarre, and he fought under his banner at Arques and Ivry. True to the family traditions, he was a bold and ready fighter, active,

pushing, and not over-scrupulous; he enjoyed the favour of two sovereigns, was made captain of the guards, and at last obtained the office of grand provost. He was, we are told, a good Catholic, but scantily educated, resembling in both respects most gentlemen of the period. When eighteen years old, François married Susanne de la Porte, a girl of fifteen, belonging to a reputable parliamentary family. If the pedigree of the Cardinal's mother was less illustrious than that of his grandmother, her character was much more amiable; she was a quiet, judicious woman, who brought up her children wisely and well. Five children were born to her, three sons and two daughters. On September 9, 1585, the third and last son was born in Paris, where his parents were temporarily residing, and in May, 1586, at the church of St. Eustache, the future Cardinal was baptised by the name of Armand Jehan, son of François du Plessis, Seigneur of Richelieu, and of Dame Susanne de la Porte, his wife. Five years later, in 1590, when he was only forty-two, the father's career of brawls and warfare came to an end; he died of a sudden fever, much regretted, as we are told, by his associates and his sovereign. He left a widow and five children, and an estate quite insufficient for their needs.

The provost was heavily in debt when he died; it was even necessary, so it was said, to put in pledge his collar of the Order of the Holy Ghost to pay the expenses of his funeral. The widow administered the family estate more prudently than her husband had done; possessing good judgment, and practising



FRANÇOIS DU PLESSIS, SEIGNEUR DE RICHELIEU, THE FATHER OF THE CARDINAL.

FROM THE DRAWING IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY, PARIS.

Reproduced from Hanotaux's "Histoire du Cardinal de Richelieu."



a rigorous economy, she succeeded in saving the possessions of the family, which, indeed, were of no great value, even when the mortgages on them were paid. Like many needy nobles, the Richelieus obtained assistance from the royal purse. In 1503, twenty thousand livres were paid to Susanne de la Porte; in the next year she received fifteen thousand more as compensation for some abbey; and when the oldest son was of age to attend Court, he at once received a pension of three thousand livres.

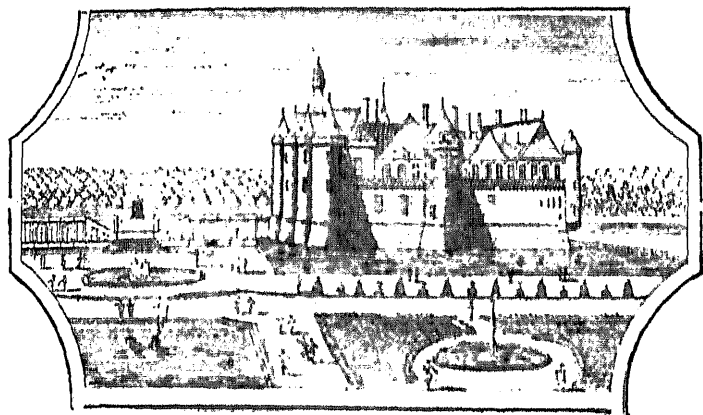
The family residence was the château of Richelieu, and there Armand spent the earlier years of his life. When he became rich and famous, he rebuilt the ancient home of his race. There were other and more commanding sites which he might have chosen, but, whether from a desire to magnify the importance of his ancestry, or from attachment to his early home, he preferred the spot where the castle of the Richelieus had long stood. Against the wish of the architect, as it was said, he insisted on preserving some portions of the ancient structure—the chapel, the great hall, the chamber occupied by his mother. Little of the château built by the Cardinal now remains, but the extensive park which was admired for its beauty in his day, the trim avenues, the canals, and jets of water are still there, not greatly changed in appearance since Richelieu wandered about them in his boyhood.

His pride—it may be called his vanity—was shown in many things connected with the family seat. Not far distant was the château of Champigny, belonging to the great family of Montpensier

which much exceeded in splendour the early home of the Richelieus, and at this, as a boy, he may have gazed with envious admiration. When he had become prime minister, he induced, or rather compelled, Gaston to sell Champigny to him, and he then pulled down the château and used the stone in the construction of the new and splendid home for his own family, which now had no neighbour to rival it.

The château of Richelieu, as it stood in his youth, was a good specimen of a feudal building, constructed during the Hundred Years' War in a period of almost perpetual disturbance. Eight towers protected it, and it was surrounded by a deep and broad fosse. Within were the great halls, the numerous courts, galleries, and chambers of a castle, intended not merely for the residence of a family, but for the presence of a body of soldiers in time of need. It was surmounted by the confusion of roofs, turrets, and chimneys which gives a picturesque charm to the few specimens of the early French Renaissance that still survive. It was an agreeable home, and was also well fitted to stand any ordinary siege at a time when heavy artillery was unknown.

The country about was flat and fertile, and the view from the château was extensive, though not striking. It stood on a small island, surrounded by the waters of the Mable, not far from the little village of Braye. There the Richelieus dwelt with a certain degree of feudal importance, but, like many another family of country gentlemen, with more state than ready money. Their turbulent activity



THE CHÂTEAU OF RICHELIEU BEFORE ITS REBUILDING BY THE CARDINAL,
FROM AN OLD PRINT IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY, PARIS.

Reproduced from Haugstam's "Histoire du Cardinal de Richelieu."

had not gained them wealth, and the mother of the Cardinal was often disturbed by lack of means.

The condition of the surrounding country during Richelieu's youth might well have impressed the mind of the future statesman with the necessity for a stronger Government. Long years of civil war had devastated the province. After Henry III.'s death, Poitou espoused the cause of the League. Not until Henry IV. had been for some years on the throne was he able to restore order throughout France, and, in the meantime, Poitou, when not the seat of active warfare, was infested by bands of unruly marauders; trade was at a standstill; the peasant saw his field pillaged and his crop destroyed; the roads were so unsafe that few ventured to travel.

Richelieu passed the first years of his life in a community that was in constant apprehension of arson and pillage, in a land where famine and pestilence were frequent visitors, and where these conditions existed because the law was not strong enough to repress the violent and protect the orderly. These early impressions were as deeply implanted in his mind as the lessons he conned with his tutor, and formed quite as important a part of his education.

Notwithstanding the troubled condition of the country, the children were not allowed to neglect the studies regarded as proper for those of their class. Armand began his education at the château under the charge of a prior named Guillot, known for his charities and piety. He did not continue long under the instruction of the amiable prior; at

the age of nine he was sent to Paris and entered College of Navarre, which his father and uncles attended. There he pursued the educational course of the period, from which could be gleaned a surprisingly small amount of useful information. The chief drill was in Latin; the scholars were required to use this language in their conversation, and Latin authorities were diligently studied. Richelieu pursued also the course technically known as philosophy, in which were embraced logic and such science as could be found in the books of Aristotle.

The schooling of the time was narrow and severe, and learning was imparted with the aid of vigorous discipline. The rector, Jean Yon, was an amiable and venerable man, but he did not spare the students. In his days of power and glory, the Cardinal was sometimes visited by his former preceptor, and he tells us that he always saw him enter with a certain sensation of fear.

When Armand had finished with grammar and philosophy, he began studies that were regarded much more important for a gentleman whose career was to be passed at the Court and on the battle-field. There was no thought of making a priest of the young Richelieu, and he had no taste for a religious vocation. His natural inclination was for the career of a soldier, in which so many of his ancestors spent their lives, and having acquired the moderate amount of learning, for the most part quite useless which was proper for one of his rank, he entered the academy of Antoine du Ploux. There were taught the accomplishments required

a gentleman and a soldier. The pupils were drilled in riding, fencing, the use of arms, and in the games of the period. The academy was, moreover, a finishing school for manners, and Pluvinel endeavoured to impart to his scholars the latest fashions of the Court, the graceful bearing and ready wit that befitted an accomplished cavalier.

While the Marquis of Chillou, as Richelieu was then called, was fitting himself to be a soldier and a courtier, his career was suddenly changed by considerations of family interest. Notwithstanding his infirm health, Richelieu had qualities that would have made him a good soldier, and by nature he hankered for fighting rather than praying. Yet it is probable that the exchange of arms for the Church afforded a better field for his subtle and astute genius.

The circumstances that made a priest of Richelieu were of a nature not uncommon at that period. In default of ready money, the monarch often rewarded faithful servants by the patronage of some ecclesiastical preferment, and Henry III., in return for the services of Richelieu's father, had given the family the right to fill the bishopric of Luçon. Such grants were usually unprofitable to the spiritual interests of the faithful. The Richelieus administered their bishopric as did the holders of most livings fallen into secular hands: they confined their attention to laying hold of the ecclesiastical emoluments and did not concern themselves with the needs of the diocese. A succession of nominal bishops collected the revenues for the benefit of the family, and the Episcopal see in reality remained vacant.

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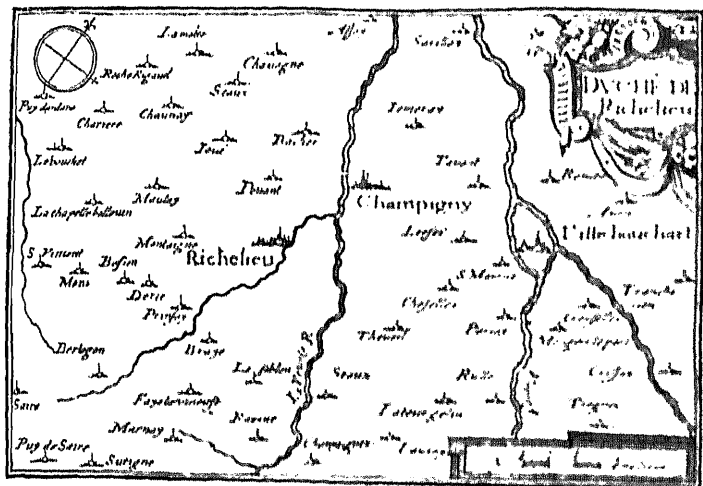
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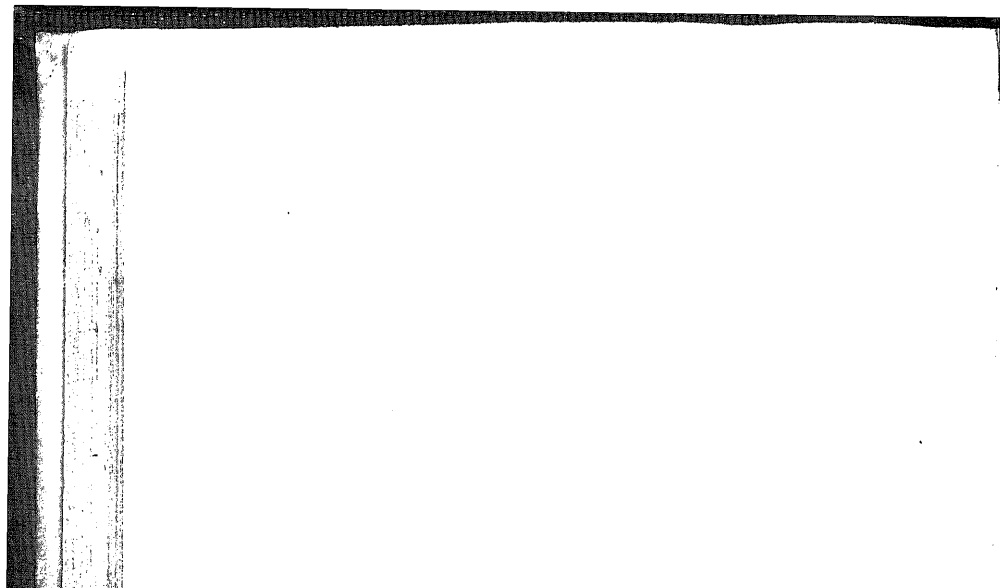
There were many gross abuses in the ecclesiastical establishment, but a scandal like this, however convenient for the dilapidated fortunes of the Richelieus, could not continue indefinitely. The chapter were perhaps willing to do without a bishop, but they would not allow the revenues of the diocese to be absorbed while the religious buildings went to ruin from lack of repairs. Accordingly, the canons began a suit against Madame de Richelieu, asking that she be compelled to apply some part of the moneys she received to the needs of the church. This action brought matters to a crisis; however favourable the authorities or the courts might be to her interests, they could not publicly declare that the cathedral of Luçon must be left to decay, in order that Madame de Richelieu might use the bishop's salary to educate her children and pay her domestics.

The mother decided that if the Episcopal salary could no longer be applied to the needs of the entire family, the Episcopal see might furnish an establishment for one of the sons. Accordingly, the second son was chosen for the office, and though only twelve years of age, Alphonse de Richelieu was recognised as titular Bishop of Luçon. But the son was unwilling to carry out his mother's prudent arrangement; as Alphonse approached his majority, he declared himself unfit for the duties of the office and refused to accept it. His ancestors and kinsfolk were eager for temporal advantages and were little disturbed by scruples, but Alphonse was a being of a different sort; he said that he was not fit to be a bishop, and, therefore, he would not be one. He



DUCHY OF RICHELIEU.

FROM HANOTAUX'S "HISTOIRE DU CARDINAL DE RICHELIEU."



refused the mitre and chose to become a monk. He became an inmate of the convent of the Grande Chartreuse, and there passed his days in pious obscurity until he was called from his retreat by the younger brother, who had become the ruler of France.

When Alphonse failed her, the mother turned to her third son, and he was not the person to prefer a convent to a bishopric. Armand had no special desire for a religious career; he had been bred for the army, and that was the calling most to his taste, but the present opportunity was not one to be neglected by a young man who combined ambition with sound judgment. The see of Luçon was not richly endowed or important among French bishoprics, but it was not everyone who could secure a mitre at twenty-one, even if it were not of the greatest weight. Certainly it was better to be a bishop than a lieutenant of dragoons; the position gave rank and precedence, it furnished an opportunity for acquiring prominence and power. Richelieu's health was infirm from childhood, and he seemed better fitted physically for the career of a priest than of a soldier. It was accordingly decided that the third son should be the bishop of the family.

Having chosen his calling, Richelieu was not the man to dawdle in his preparations for it; he quitted the academy and exchanged fencing and fashion for the more serious studies of theology. In his new profession he made good progress, and soon familiarised himself with the theology and metaphysics taught in the schools of the Sorbonne.

Nor was he long delayed in receiving the reward of his labours; in 1606, when twenty-one years of age, Armand de Richelieu was nominated by Henry IV. Bishop of Luçon. He lacked nearly five years of the canonical age, and the French ambassador at Rome was instructed to ask for the papal dispensation. As this was slow in coming, Richelieu resolved to take the matter in his own hands. Accordingly, he started for Rome, there to prosecute his appeal in person. He was successful in obtaining the favour of Paul V., and the dispensation was granted with no more delay than was ordinarily required by the usages of the Roman curia. In April, 1607, the young aspirant was duly consecrated as Bishop of Luçon; he was not quite twenty-three.

In after years, Richelieu's enemies accused him of securing his promotion by exhibiting to the Pope a false certificate of baptism, and asserted that when Paul was informed of the fraud he declared that the new bishop would surely prove a great rogue. This slander does not seem to be supported either by the evidence or the probabilities. The object of Richelieu's visit to Rome was to obtain a dispensation that would allow him to become a bishop notwithstanding his insufficient age; his lack of the required years was the only excuse for his going there instead of waiting quietly in France for his bull. It was most unlikely that a candidate asking a dispensation would present a certificate showing that no dispensation was needed. Nor was there any necessity for resorting to fraud, when dispensations for

insufficient age were liberally granted. Many scions of great families were unwilling to wait until twenty-five before assuming the mitre, and the canonical rule was rarely allowed to stand in the way of their early promotion. Richelieu did not belong to a great family, but he had influential friends to plead for him, and a fluent tongue to plead for himself; it would have been surprising if the dispensation had been refused, so there was no necessity for forged documents.

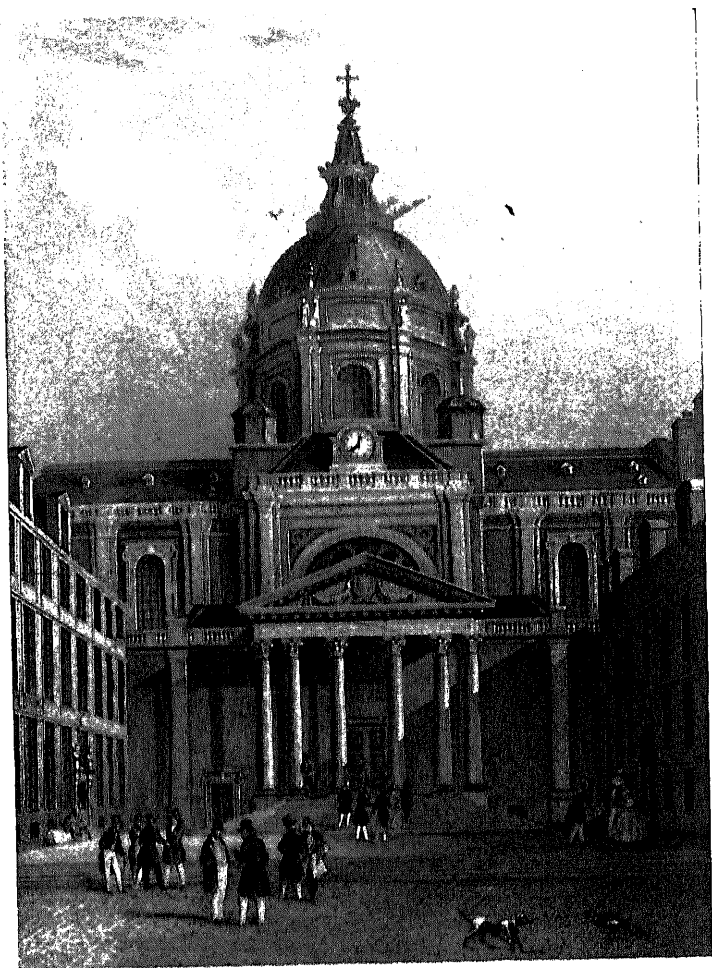
The new dignitary returned to Paris and to his studies at the Sorbonne. It was not often that a bishop sat on the students' benches, and his way was sure to be made easy. He soon delivered the prescribed thesis, received the required degree, and was officially declared to be ready for his ecclesiastical work.

The traditions of the Church required a bishop to live among his flock, but this rule was often disregarded. Many bishops spent little time in their dioceses, and many spent none at all. Paris furnished more interest for the worldly and more opportunity for the ambitious; the ecclesiastic who could join in prayers with the King, and in praises of him, was more apt to become a minister or a cardinal than his Episcopal brother who spent his days exhorting the faithful or wrangling with his canons, in some remote district of France.

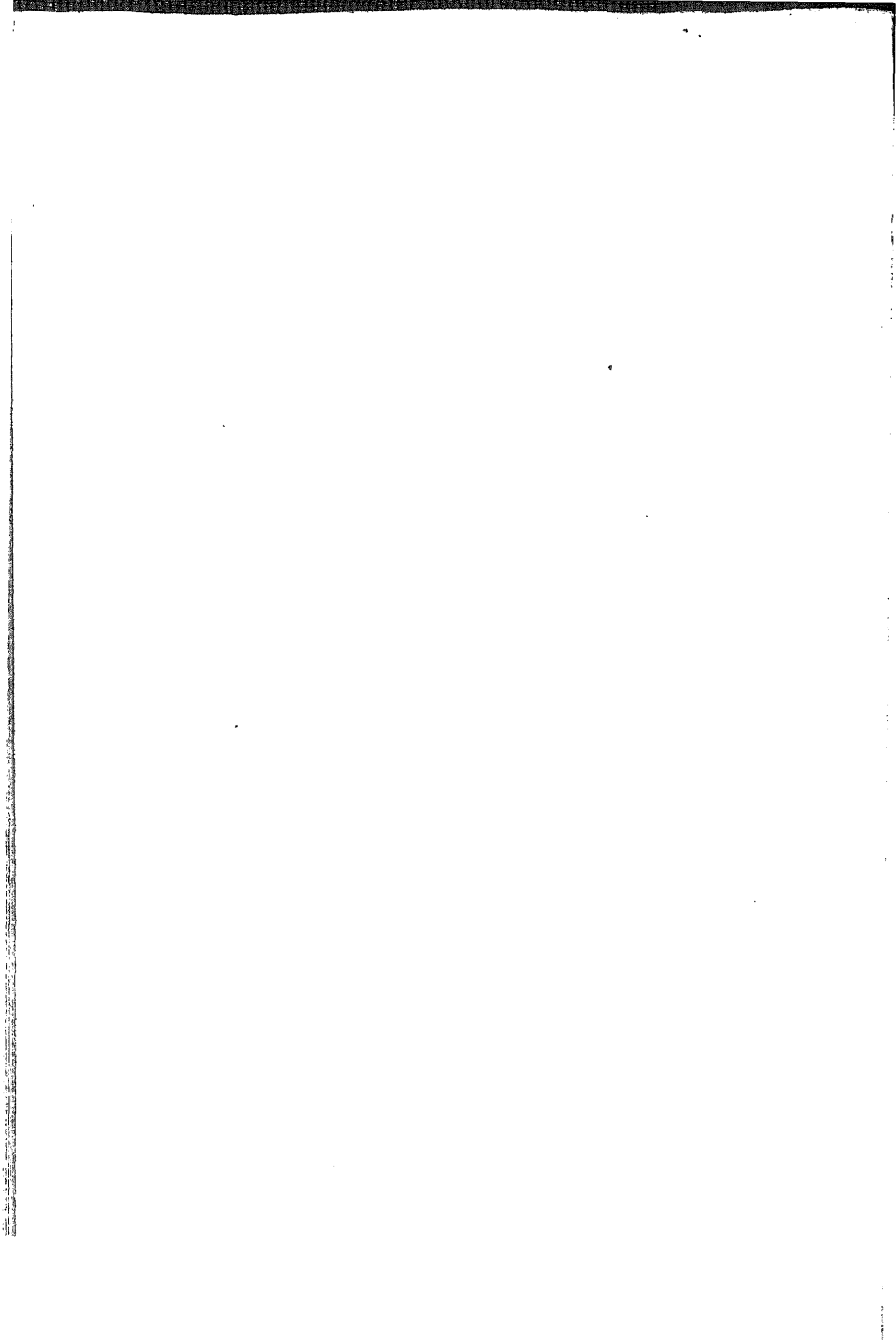
It might, therefore, have been expected that Richelieu would prefer to push his fortunes at Court, rather than retire to a small and obscure bishopric. Such was not his decision; after a short

stay at Paris, he set out for his new see, and devoted his attention to the interests of his flock with praiseworthy assiduity. He was not a man to sacrifice his temporal ambitions to the performance of ecclesiastical duties, but he decided wisely, if only his own advancement were to be considered. He was still a very young man, little known, and with a small income. His office gave him indeed a certain rank at Court, yet he was an unimportant personage among great officials, wealthy nobles, and favoured courtiers. In his diocese, on the other hand, he could exercise authority, and this was always dear to his heart; the faithful performance of his work might advance his fortunes more rapidly than dancing attendance on the Queen or her ministers; he was young and could bide his time. At all events he braved a winter's journey, which in those days of bad roads was always a disagreeable and sometimes a dangerous undertaking, and on December 21, 1608, he celebrated pontifical mass in the cathedral that had long stood in dilapidated disuse. It was sixty years since the faithful at Luçon had been favoured with a bishop residing among them.

Richelieu's flock had suffered from spiritual want, and they were not much better off in their temporal condition. Luçon was situated in lower Poitou, and was a town of two or three thousand people, the seat of a very small diocese, surrounded by great marshes, in a district both unhealthy and unproductive. The peasants who lived among the marshes of lower Poitou, so a traveller declares, were the poorest in France. Naturally, the bishop of an



THE SORBONNE (INTERIOR OF THE COURT).
FROM A STEEL ENGRAVING.



impoverished flock, where the ecclesiastical buildings and revenues had been neglected for half a century, could not expect a large income or luxurious surroundings. His parishioners were burdened by taxation, his cathedral was dilapidated, and his revenues were small. Even his ecclesiastical wardrobe was scanty, and he lamented the condition of his tunics and dalmatics. All this was distasteful to a man who loved splendid surroundings, who thirsted not only for power, but for its trappings and external pomp. The new incumbent was little pleased. His was, he wrote, the poorest, the dirtiest, and the most disagreeable bishopric in France. There was no garden to his house, no horse for his carriage; he borrowed horses from friends and sighed bitterly for a set of plate. "If I could have some silver plates," he wrote a lady, "my position would gain a little dignity." He was long engaged in negotiations for a service of plate, but the five hundred crowns required for its purchase caused a delay of some years.

He encountered other embarrassments as he assumed his bishopric. The litigation by which the canons sought to compel Madame de Richelieu to restore the dilapidated cathedral was still pending, and good judgment was needed in that thorny affair. These trials met a young man who was actuated by no love for the quiet performance of religious work, and who regarded his bishopric as only a stepping-stone for his ambition. But if the duties were little to his taste, he performed them with reasonable fidelity. The litigation was settled and the cathedral repaired. The bishop sought to better the

condition of his flock by obtaining for them some reduction in taxation. In his treatment of the clergy under his charge, he was sometimes imperious, but he was usually judicious. With Richelieu in a petty bishopric, as with Napoleon on an unimportant island, his restless activity manifested itself, however restricted the sphere for its exercise. Richelieu not only laboured for the temporal interests of his flock, but he preached to them with zeal. Judging from the few samples we have of his sermons, they were marked by the bad literary taste of the period: they were crammed with citations, burdened with pedantry, and filled with mythological metaphors. Later, his enemies declared that his preaching was poor and ineffective, while flatterers insisted that he won great repute as a sacred orator. That he made himself somewhat known as a preacher was shown by the prominence accorded to him a little later among the clergy at the States-General.

- ✓ During his residence at Luçon, Richelieu found time for a considerable amount of theological writing. All his life he thirsted for literary distinction, but the qualities which made him a great statesman did not make him a great writer. At times, his style was clear and vigorous, but it was frequently injured by over-elaboration, by struggling for effect, by artificial modes of expression that weary the reader. No more in literature than in the routine of ordinary life had Richelieu any taste for simplicity, and metaphors and tropes were as dear to him as sets of silver plate.

His writings were not inconsiderable in bulk. Some of them were published later in life, but they were largely prepared during the peaceful years spent at Luçon. A volume of *Ordinances* which early appeared throws light on abuses that were sufficiently common to require Episcopal condemnation. Penalties by fine were imposed upon any of the clergy who kept concubines in their houses, who got drunk, or indulged in public debauchery. "We have noticed with regret," says the pastoral, "that many priests go in bodies to the fairs and markets of the large towns, there indulging in unseemly festivities," and this also was forbidden.

These prohibitions do not imply that the moral condition of the clergy was, on the whole, low, but many of them were in manners and education little removed from the peasantry to whom they ministered; the civil wars of the sixteenth century had bred disorder among the clergy as well as among the laity, and instances of unedifying conduct were not uncommon. During Richelieu's life, there was a marked improvement in the entire Gallican Church, both in the higher and the lower clergy, and to this end he always laboured faithfully, whether as an unimportant bishop, or as a cardinal at the head of the State.

Other admonitions show that the future statesman was not free from beliefs which found acceptance at that period. He was much disturbed by the possibility of evil worked by necromancers. In one passage he refers to superstitions, some of which still find believers among the credulous and the vulgar.

“When a certain thing has a certain effect,” he writes, “and we recognise that it does not possess that quality by its nature, and that God has not promised to give it the power supernaturally, such a thing should be condemned as diabolical; for example, seeing the moon over the left shoulder, considering certain days as fortunate or unfortunate, putting confidence in a certain number of lighted candles,” etc.

His book called *The Instruction of a Christian* appeared in 1619; it was largely read and enjoyed the distinction of translation into several languages; though not an extraordinary work, it contained much common sense and sound religion briefly and tersely put. Among other directions, were some which illustrate again the bishop's belief in magic arts, for he expressly condemned those who by means of magicians and sorcerers invoked demons, and used these means to discover secrets, or to accomplish still more evil ends.

Richelieu published also various works of controversy against the Huguenots, one of which was entitled *A Method to Convert those who have Separated themselves from the Church*. But in these controversial writings he did not rise above the average of similar treatises, and the average is not high; the “Method” was not efficacious, and the dragoons of Louis XIV. brought more Huguenots into the fold than the arguments of Richelieu.

Thus engaged in his church work and in theological writing, during six years Richelieu spent his time almost entirely at Luçon, but his attention to the affairs of a petty bishopric did not interfere

with his watchful search for any chance of action on a larger field. His ambition was for political distinction, for the career of a statesman; he desired prominence and power. He had many influential friends with whom he corresponded, and whose favour he sought to cultivate. He was eager for promotion and not over-scrupulous in the pursuit, and he would have smiled at the modern apothegm that the office should seek the man. He believed that the man should seek the office with all his might; he knew that he was fitted to do great things, and he neglected no means by which he could obtain the opportunity. The letters of the Bishop of Luçon, when he was a humble cultivator of the great, do not resemble those of the imperious Cardinal at the height of his power, and there is often a strain of obsequious fawning that is not agreeable. It did not disturb Richelieu: he was not the man to disdain an advantage because the means of obtaining it might offend a feeling of personal dignity; if it were expedient to fawn on a stupid cardinal, to defend an unscrupulous adventurer, or to flatter an ignorant queen, Richelieu did it with zeal and without compunction.

In the political changes that followed the death of Henry IV., Richelieu hoped to find some opening for himself. Henry had regarded the young bishop with friendly eyes, but he was surrounded by ministers who had obtained his confidence by long and faithful service. The chief place in the royal favour was held by Sully, and that sagacious

statesman would not have favoured the promotion of an aspiring young politician like Richelieu.

But in May, 1610, Henry was murdered and the aspect of French politics changed. Louis XIII. was a child of eight, his mother, Mary de' Medici, was declared regent, and thus the posterity of the fortunate Florentine merchants again became rulers of France. Mary bore little resemblance to her famous predecessor; she possessed neither Catherine's ability, nor her energy, nor her cruelty. The widow of Henry IV. was a commonplace woman, narrow in her intelligence and bigoted in her religion, controlled by vulgar favourites, fond of luxury, averse to toil, who desired tranquillity and peace. She was singularly unfortunate in obtaining what she wished; her regency was a period of constant disorder; her power was overthrown by the murder of those to whom she was most attached; she suffered from the ingratitude of a son who did not love her, and of a minister whom she had helped to become great; she spent long years wandering about Europe, and ended a life of disappointment by a death in exile.

No one who read the unctuous declaration of the Bishop of Luçon, which he sent to be presented to Mary de' Medici, would have supposed that one expressing such exuberant loyalty to the Queen, would in time become the man whom, of all the world, she hated most. Richelieu saw that the Regent was for many years to be the dispenser of power, and that it was unlikely the ancient servants of Henry IV. could long enjoy her confidence. He at once



MARY DE' MEDICI.
FROM THE PAINTING BY F. PORBUS IN PRADO MUSEUM IN MADRID



forwarded a declaration of fidelity, in which he mingled regrets for the loss of the King with praises for the wisdom of that virtuous princess whom God had sent for their needs, and prayed that death might remove him should he ever be wanting in fidelity to her. This paper, prepared with manifest care, did not reach its destination; the friends to whom it was intrusted decided that they would not present it to the Queen. Possibly they thought that the exuberance of its style might not produce the desired effect; probably there seemed to be no special need of a declaration of fidelity from the somewhat obscure Bishop of Luçon, and it might be interpreted as a bid for favour rather than as an outpouring of zeal.

Richelieu's ambition met with another disappointment in the same year, 1610. He sought to be elected one of the representatives to the assembly of the clergy that was soon to meet at Paris. His agents intrigued for him with much zeal and little success. He was still a young man, almost unknown outside of his own diocese; his clerical associates probably regarded his canvass as presumptuous, and they chose the Archbishop of Bordeaux and the Bishop of Aure as their representatives.

But he was not a man to be disheartened by rebuffs. He visited Paris from time to time, and endeavoured to obtain the confidence of those in power. The affairs of his diocese, though apparently not neglected, became less important to him as he watched with increasing attention the shifting scenes of political life, and at last the opportunity

came for the young aspirant to display his talents on a more conspicuous field than the poor and petty diocese of Luçon.

The feeble Government of Mary de' Medici was marked by disorder and discontent. She endeavoured to appease an unruly nobility by a profuse distribution of places and pensions, but the more she gave the more was demanded. Seeking tranquillity by bribery, she failed to obtain it when she could bribe no more; though the thrift of Sully had accumulated in the State treasury a sum great for those days it was soon dissipated by the Regent; the money so freely distributed among powerful nobles excited their cupidity and did not quiet their turbulence, and they were now ready to take up arms in order to compel further concessions from the Queen. The leader in these troubles was the Prince of Condé, whose rank and wealth made him a great personage in the State. He was closely related to Henry of Navarre, and only the lives of Louis XIII. and his younger brother stood between Condé and the throne. But his character was as weak as his power was great; the descendant of the heroic Condés, the leaders in the Huguenot wars, the father of the great Condé, the hero of Lens and Rocroi, was himself a prince of singularly unheroic mould. He was irresolute, timid, with no talent except for intrigue, and no passion except for money. Whatever his defects of character, his rank made him prominent, and he was the spokesman of a body of greedy and unruly noblemen. As their demands were not granted, in the spring of



CHARLOTTE MARGUERITE DE MONTMORENCI, PRINCESS OF CONDÉ.
FROM MONMERQUÉ'S "TALLEMANT DES RÉAUX."



1614 they took up arms and a petty civil war began. There was little fighting, but a good deal of pillaging, in which the armies on either side showed equal zeal. The Regent was unwilling to take vigorous steps against the insurgents, and by a liberal bestowal of places and pensions on a few of the leaders, she bought her peace. But as a result of this unimportant rising, the man who was to crush the unruly power of the French nobility found his opportunity to enter public life.

In order to make some pretence of zeal for public interests, Condé had asked that the States-General should be called together. When his personal demands were satisfied, he intimated to the Regent that this request would be waived, but the Queen's ministers advised her to convene the body and remove a pretext for future disturbances. Accordingly, in June, 1614, a summons was issued, bidding the clergy, nobles, and commons of France to choose representatives, who should meet at Sens in September, and advise as to the needs of the State. The States-General were not again to be convened until the famous assemblage of 1789; and that soon discarded the name as it did the nature of the body which for centuries had been a part of the French monarchy. There was a certain dramatic fitness that at the session in which the States-General, properly so called, passed out of French history, one of the members should be the man who was so to strengthen the French monarchy that for almost two hundred years the representatives of the French people were not again convened.

In the elections of members to the States-General, the influence of the Government was usually exercised without concealment. Discreet and well-affected persons received the support of the numerous functionaries who were connected with the central Government; ordinarily the number of those entitled to vote was small, and it was not difficult to secure the return of the candidate approved by the authorities. During the late troubles, Richelieu had shown his good-will and he was favourably regarded by those in power. He now announced his candidacy as a delegate of the clergy, and his ambition met with no obstacles. The clergy of Poitou assembled at Poitiers to elect their representatives, and the Bishop of Luçon and the Dean of Saint Hilaire were chosen without opposition.

The returns from the elections soon showed that the Government would have little trouble in controlling the deliberations of the body, and the place of meeting was accordingly changed to Paris. On the 26th of October, 1614, the representatives of the three estates gathered at the convent of the Augustines, and from there marched with much mediæval pomp to Notre Dame, where mass was celebrated; on the following day they held their first session at the Palais Bourbon. There the addresses of the estates were delivered to the King. The orators of the clergy and nobility remained standing while they presented their requests, but the spokesman of the third estate, to mark the inferiority of his order, pronounced his speech on bended knee. When these formalities were over, the representatives of

each estate met in separate session, and devoted themselves to the preparation of the cahiers, the memorials which contained their petitions to the sovereign.

The proceedings of the last States-General before the Revolution are unimportant in French history, and they were only important in Richelieu's career because they enabled him to gain a certain prominence and bring himself to the attention of the Court. His conduct during the session of the body was satisfactory to the Queen; he started no troublesome questions and his voice and vote were always at the command of the Government. Probably at her suggestion, he was chosen as spokesman of the clergy at the formal meeting, where the representatives of the three orders presented to the sovereign the result of their deliberations and asked his favourable consideration of their petitions. There was nothing in Richelieu's address to suggest his future career as a statesman, nor did it indicate any special ability. "He spoke for one long hour, and was listened to with attention," is the only comment made on his effort by a chronicler. The speech contained many tedious references to antiquity and many fulsome references to the Queen, and the only subject in which the orator showed special earnestness was in his plea for the employment of the clergy in the service of the State.

"Their profession," he said, "helps to fit them for the public service; they must possess capacity, be full of probity, and govern themselves with prudence, and these are the qualities necessary for the service of the State.

They are freer than others from the private interests which so often harm the public; observing celibacy, they have nothing to survive them but their souls, and these do not accumulate earthly treasures."

The States-General of 1614 came to an unsatisfactory and inglorious close. It was the fatal weakness of this body that it could only petition, it could not decree; when its requests were presented to the King, its mission was ended. As it had no control over the purse, there were no means by which it could enforce a speedy and a favourable answer to its demands. The deputies of the third estate wished to remain in session until the King had answered their petitions; if they once dispersed, they knew well that their cahiers would be of little more importance than waste paper. But the Government was eager to be rid of anything that bore the semblance of a representative body. When, on the day following the presentation of the cahiers, the deputies assembled at the convent of the Augustines, they found the hall empty of benches, and they were brusquely informed that their meetings must be discontinued. This announcement filled them with dismay. A member writes:

"One would beat his breast, reproaching his own remissness, and would fain atone for a session so unfruitful, so pernicious to the state and to the kingdom of a young prince, fearing the King's censure when age should teach him the disorders which the States had not removed, but had rather fomented and increased. Another planned his return, abhorred his stay at Paris, desired to see

his house, his wife, and friends, and to forget in their tenderness the memory of his grief at expiring liberty. 'What a shame,' said another, 'what confusion for France, to see those who represent her so little esteemed that they are not recognised as deputies, and are hardly treated as Frenchmen!'"

Their complaints were unheeded. A formal answer was sent to some of the requests, and the members were informed that the King, in his own good time, would answer the other cahiers when there was sufficient time for their examination. The representatives of the clergy and nobility had taken little interest in the proceedings of the States-General, and they were indifferent as to the results. The deputies of the third estate had been more zealous, and they now returned to their homes little pleased at the fruit of their labours. The States-General ceased to be of importance in the development of the French monarchy, there was no room for them in the centralised and despotic Government which was perfected by Richelieu and Louis XIV.

In one respect certainly the orator of the clergy at the States-General had been sincere—in his plea for the employment of the clergy. He strongly desired that the Bishop of Luçon should receive political preferment, and when the session of the States had closed, he remained for the most part at Paris, cultivating the favour of the Queen and her ministers, and seeking a speedy opportunity for his own entrance into public affairs.

He made many friends, who watched his interests

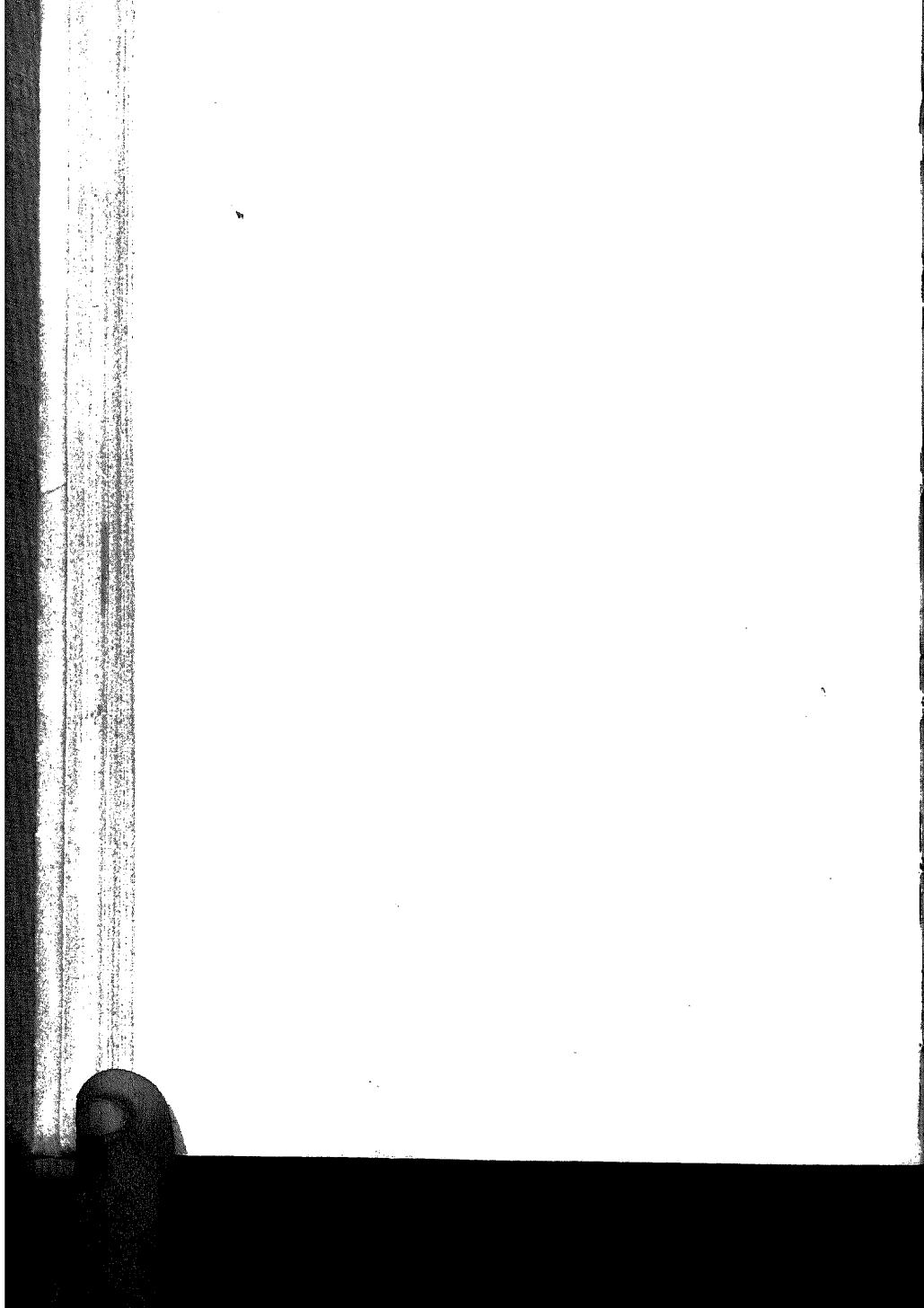
and were ready to speak a good word for the politic young bishop. Some of them complained that, when Richelieu attained to power, his gratitude to early friends was not such as they expected from his former protestations of affection. It was doubtless so. Richelieu was absorbed in his ambition; on his death-bed, he declared that he had no enemies but those of the State, and he might have said the same thing about his friends. To the men who could assist him in his political schemes, like Father Joseph and Mazarin, he was always constant; those who aided him in his obscurity but could render no further service, occupied little place in his mind or memory.

With the regency of Mary de' Medici began the great prosperity of the Concinis. They had long enjoyed the Queen's good-will, but not until she attained to power could she show the lengths to which her favour would go. The influence of the Concinis in French politics was so extraordinary and they were so connected with the beginnings of Richelieu's career, that some account of their rise is not without interest. Leonora Dori was the daughter of a Florentine carpenter and the foster-sister of Mary de' Medici. This early relation ripened into a lifelong affection. Leonora was an ignorant woman, vulgar in her tastes and deformed in her person, but she became the trusted adviser of the princess, and when the latter was called to the throne of France, she took Leonora with her to Paris, and also a handsome young Italian gentleman of good birth and no means, called Concino Concini.



CONCINO CONCINI, MARQUIS D'ANCRE, MARSHAL OF FRANCE.

FROM A PAINTING BY LECOQ.



Concino presently married the Queen's waiting-woman and friend, and the two exercised over the weak mind of their patroness a strong and unwholesome influence.

After Henry's death, the Queen was the head of the Government, and the Concinis became great personages in the State. Whether the Queen was influenced by her ancient fondness for her foster-sister, or by a more recent affection for her foster-sister's husband, wealth and office were showered upon the fortunate man. He was made a marquis, he was made a marshal, he was first gentleman of the chamber, he was the governor of Amiens, and lieutenant-general of Picardy. Years before, he had arrived in France a penniless adventurer. "When I came here," he said, "I did not have a sou, and I owed eight thousand crowns."

Now his wealth was estimated at ten millions. This extraordinary prosperity was not borne with meekness, and naturally Concini was the object of almost universal dislike. But, for the present, his star seemed in the ascendant, and he declared that he would see how far fortune could carry a mortal.

In the meantime, Richelieu had been diligent in seeking to secure for himself some position at the Court, and his efforts met with success. He had powerful friends, and he never allowed them to become slack in seeking his advancement. In 1615, Louis XIII., then a boy of fourteen, was married to Anne of Austria, a daughter of Philip III. of Spain, who was a few months younger than her husband. Though the new Queen was only a child, she was

surrounded by a crowd of officials, the number of whom corresponded to her dignity rather than to her years, and among them the Bishop of Luçon received the appointment of almoner. The duties of his position were light, but it gave him a recognised position at Court, and enabled him to make further progress in the favour of the Queen-mother. His action as a deputy in the States-General had brought him into closer relations with those in power. He flattered himself, and not without reason, that he was now regarded by the Queen-mother and Concini as one who might prove a faithful and useful adviser. He was employed in various confidential missions: he was sent to treat with the Prince of Condé, who was engaged in one of his frequent revolts, and afterwards he acted as secret ambassador to the Duke of Nevers, a nobleman sufficiently powerful and sufficiently unruly to treat with the King almost on the footing of a foreign potentate. In all these matters he acquitted himself with skill; he acquired a reputation for adroitness, activity, and unscrupulousness, and was regarded as a useful and rising man. The character of the Concinis gained them many enemies, but the young Bishop of Luçon was not a man to antagonise those from whom he could hope for promotion. He assured Concini of his devotion and succeeded in obtaining the Italian's confidence. "I entreat you to believe," the bishop wrote the favourite, "that my promises will be followed by fulfilment, and that while you do me the honour to love me, I shall always be able to serve you right worthily."

It is probable that we can see traces of Richelieu's vigour in a step now taken by the Queen-mother. When he became the ruler of France, there was no nobleman so powerful that the Government could not safely treat him as it did any other subject, but this was far from being the case in the early years of the reign of Louis XIII. The Prince of Condé was so great a personage that Mary de' Medici long hesitated to take any vigorous measures against him, but stirred into action, either by the counsels of Concini, or the influence of the young and resolute Bishop of Luçon, she now ordered Condé's arrest. He submitted without resistance, and when three years later he was set at liberty, he left the prison walls with his youthful turbulence permanently tamed. The way was now opened for the ascendancy of the Italian favourite, who, with infinitely less capacity, anticipated his compatriot Mazarin in becoming the head of the French government. He had long mistrusted the ministers; he now resolved to bring about their overthrow, and fill their places with men devoted to his own interests.

Concini had overthrown his most dangerous rival, and he wished to have only friends in the royal council. With the exception of Sully, the ministers of Henry IV. were still in office, but they were old and feeble men, and while they retained their positions, they had lost their power. They were now dismissed and their places filled by men selected by the favourite. All of them were comparatively obscure, and, with one exception, after a brief enjoyment of power, they returned to the obscurity from

which they sprang. But, in 1616, the Bishop of Luçon received his appointment as one of the King's secretaries of state. He was only thirty-one. With such skill and industry had he pressed his fortunes, that two years after he arrived at Paris as a deputy to the States-General, an obscure ecclesiastic, holding a petty bishopric, he had gained the confidence of the Queen and her advisers, and now became one of the ministers of the State. A few weeks before, he had been chosen as ambassador to Spain, but he gladly relinquished this employment to become a member of the Government.

Notwithstanding the rapidity of his elevation, Richelieu was still a very obscure man; he was little known in the community, and no one dreamed of the career that lay before him. He had made his way into office by attaching himself closely to those who had places to bestow; there was nothing to show that this adroit, eager office-seeker had the qualities of a great statesman. He owed his appointment to the good-will of Concini. A man of Richelieu's sagacity must have known the weakness of Concini's character; he must have realised that the extraordinary elevation of this vulgar Italian was an outrage and a scandal, but the new minister was little troubled by the road he pursued, so long as it led to the goal he desired. Doubtless he overestimated the duration of Concini's power; but no one could have guessed the tragic end which the favourite was so soon to meet. The King was still a boy, and Richelieu believed that if he possessed the confidence of the Queen-mother and her favourite,

he could disregard the caprices of a youth who showed neither the ability nor the desire to perform the duties of his office.

The new appointments were greeted with the disfavour that attended most of Concini's acts. The ministers were stigmatised as his creatures, as men without experience in the affairs of State, and whose promotion was due to their subservience to the caprices, the vices, and the passions of the Italian favourites. Even those who looked upon Richelieu's promotion with approval little imagined what his future policy was to be. The papal nuncio wrote that the new minister was eminent alike for eloquence, virtue, and zeal for religion, and they could ask no better man in this position than the Bishop of Luçon. The Spanish minister was still warmer in his praise. "He is my intimate friend," he wrote. "In all France they could not have chosen a person more devoted to the service of God, of our Crown, and the public weal." The Venetian ambassadors, usually so sagacious in their judgments, were no nearer right. They declared that the new minister belonged to the Spanish party, was constantly found at the Spanish Embassy, and was reported to receive a pension from the Spanish Government. Opposition to Spain was to be the chief feature of Richelieu's foreign policy, and the papacy was to find in him no such faithful servant as the nuncio hoped. But if the new minister cherished the designs which later he was to put into execution, he was shrewd enough to conceal them. His first aim was to gain power, and if the Queen

and Concini were friendly to Spain, Richelieu was not the man to delay his entry into public life by any Quixotic opposition to their views. He constantly assured Concini of his zeal for his interests, and his devotion to Concini's wife excited scandal in the community without arousing jealousy in the husband. "I can never discharge the obligations that I owe you," he wrote the marshal. "I can only show in all my actions that I have ever before my eyes the favours which I have received from you and the maréchale."

With such surroundings and under such patronage, Richelieu began his career as a minister of the State. The power which had been so eagerly sought soon slipped from his grasp, and five months later he was involved in the ruin that befell his patron. But though his term of office was brief, though he was under the necessity of yielding obedience to a presumptuous favourite and an unwise Queen, yet in this short time Richelieu showed the sagacity and resolution which he was to display on so great a scale during long years of untrammelled authority. In truth he was born to be a ruler of men; however tortuous the paths which he followed in the pursuit of power, when he had attained it he was, from the necessity of his being, the exponent of his own convictions. He could appear to adopt the views of those whose assistance he was not yet strong enough to disregard, but his actions were sure to bear the impress of his genius and his will.

In his instructions to Schomberg, the ambassador to Germany, the minister outlined the policy which

later he was to carry into execution. They showed unusual maturity and a remarkable boldness of conception in a young man who for the first time found himself in political office. Most men thus situated are quite content to adopt the traditions of their predecessors, but Richelieu had already clearly in his mind the rôle which he intended France should play in the affairs of Germany and of Europe. The Queen-mother was friendly to Spain, and it had been the chief object of her policy to ally the two kingdoms by the marriages of her children; by the Spanish, Richelieu was regarded as a trusty friend, and yet the young minister had already resolved that so far as in him lay France should be, not an adjunct of Spain, but the paramount power of Europe. "It is a calumny," he wrote Schomberg, "to say that we are so much under the influence of Spain or Rome that we should embrace the interests of either to our own prejudice or that of our ancient alliances. . . . We do not desire the advancement of Spain."

Nor was he less clear in outlining his policy toward those of the reformed faith, in which he diverged widely from the principles accepted at Rome and Madrid. "The different faiths which prevail among us do not render us different states," he wrote. "We are united under a prince in whose service no Catholic is so blind as to estimate a Spaniard better than a French Huguenot." And the future cardinal traced in no uncertain lines his future policy, that Huguenots who were loyal to the King should receive the same favour as Catholics; that France,

instead of being the servant of Spain, should seek to establish her own power at Spain's expense, and that among the German states her alliances should be formed, not upon considerations of religion, but of national advantage.

In the internal troubles that were chronic under Mary de' Medici's weak rule, Richelieu showed the same firmness; it was plain that the day when rebellious nobles would be bribed into subjection had gone by, if he remained in power. His Episcopal robes did not prevent his assuming the somewhat incongruous duties of minister of war, and he performed them with indefatigable zeal. As a result of Condé's arrest, the dukes of Nevers, Bouillon, and other great nobles had once again taken up arms, and were in open rebellion. Richelieu devoted all his energy to raising money, levying soldiers, equipping armies, and he insisted that those who took up arms against their sovereign should be reduced to obedience by force and not by favour; that they should be punished as rebels, instead of being rewarded as repentant sinners. If Richelieu had remained in power, his strong hand would soon have been laid heavily on unruly nobles. But when the fortunes of the insurgents ~~seemed~~ desperate, the aspect of affairs suddenly changed, and the new ministers found themselves involved in the overthrow of the favourite to whom they owed their elevation.

In the intrigues of the Court, and in Richelieu's own plans for his advancement, one person had been left out of the account, and that person was

the King. Louis XIII. was indeed only a youth of sixteen, immature, ignorant, untrained in public affairs. It was often said that his mother, desirous only of prolonging her own rule, purposely neglected the education of her son. Probably the deficiencies of his training were due to remissness rather than to design, but the result was the same. The King was very imperfectly educated, and his companions were for the most part of low birth and questionable character. Like many other French kings, Louis found his chief occupation in hunting; he hunted on Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday, and unless there was something to interfere, he hunted on the other days also. The hours when he was not occupied with the chase were employed in juvenile sports. For a youth of such tastes the most important official was the falconer, and for this position there was selected a man named Luines, a country gentleman of quiet manners, small means, and forty years of age. It was thought that a middle-aged man, with no showy qualities, would not obtain any dangerous influence over the young sovereign, but in this opinion the Queen-mother and her advisers fell into error. Luines was admirably fitted to please a shy and diffident youth. He was skilled in all branches of the chase, and that endeared him to his pupil; he was assiduous in his attentions, and if he lacked in brilliancy, the lack was acceptable to a dull boy.

Though the King was timid and ill-educated, he did not like to be neglected. He was jealous of power, even if he did not know how to exercise it.

and he resented his own unimportance in a Government of which he was nominally the head. The injudicious conduct of the favourite made it easy to arouse the King's ill-will towards him. There were many ready to excite his jealousy at the splendour of Concini's surroundings, to call attention to the long retinue of attendants by which the favourite was followed, and to contrast this with the scanty retinue of the King of France. Concini was often lacking in courtesy, and it was said he was injudicious enough to refuse some requests of the young King for money; if Louis showed no indignation at such rebuffs, he did not forget them.

His discontent at Concini's conduct led to secret plots to get rid of the powerful and odious favourite. The obscurity of the council that deliberated on the matter shows that the King was left in the hands of unfit companions; it consisted of the falconer, a gardener, a clerk, a soldier, a priest, and two adventurers. But, however humble their rank, they knew enough to keep their secret, and Louis himself through all his life was a master of dissimulation.

Under the laws of France, he had now been of age for nearly three years, yet he proceeded with a plot to arrest one of his own subjects with as much stealth as would a Nihilist to-day, planning the murder of a sovereign. It was finally decided that the marshal should be arrested, and if he made any resistance he should be killed. When such were the orders, one could be certain that those carrying them into effect would discover signs of resistance in their victim. The execution of the order was

confided to a captain of the guard named Vitry, and on the 24th of April, 1617, with a small band of followers, he took his station in the inner court of the Louvre. As the marshal came from his residence, Vitry stepped up to him, and putting his hand upon his arm, said, "The King has commanded me to seize your person." "Me!" cried Concini, putting his hand to his sword. "Yes, you," replied Vitry. At the same time three or four pistols were fired at the favourite and he fell dead on the spot. His followers made no resistance, and the body was plundered, stripped, and left where it fell.

On the same night the remains of the ill-fated favourite were secretly buried in the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. They were not long left at rest; the brutality of the French populace has often been excited by the taste of blood, and the mob now broke into the church, the body was dug up and hung by the heels on the gallows by the Pont Neuf. There it was exposed to every sort of brutal dismemberment; the limbs were hacked off and carried through the streets; one man tore out the heart and broiled it over the coals, and these insults were accompanied by obscene songs about the loves of the favourite and the Queen-mother. Richelieu's carriage passed while the mob were engaged in these brutalities, and he was alarmed lest his identity should be known and he receive rough treatment from those who regarded him as a follower of Concini, but he shouted lustily *Vive le roi!* and was able to get through without being recognised.

In the meantime, all was exultation among the

personal followers of the King. As Vitry returned from the assassination, Louis cried out, "Great thanks to you; now I am King." A crowd gathered about, Louis was mounted on a billiard table, where he declared that Vitry had acted with his approval, and proceeded to issue orders amid much excitement. Richelieu seems to have been uncertain as to his own fate, when he made his way through the assemblage after hearing of the murder. He had not been wholly unmindful of the vicissitudes of politics and had made some overtures to Luines; if we can trust his own statement, Luines now told him that he could retain his office, but he felt that honour required he should resign it and follow the fortunes of the Queen. It is unlikely that such an offer was made with any idea that it would be accepted, and still less likely that if Richelieu had the choice, he would have refused the power that was dear to him from any feeling of devotion to the Queen-mother. At all events, he was coldly received by the King, and soon made his retreat.

The old ministers had been hastily summoned, and Richelieu entered the council-chamber, but he was received with averted looks; no one spoke with him, he took no part in the conferences, and when asked in what capacity he was there, he left the room. He saw that his retirement from Court was inevitable, and that if he hoped for a return to favour he must accept quietly and promptly his present disgrace.

Either because he had to some extent gained Luines's confidence, or because his Episcopal robes

were a certain protection, he was treated with less severity than his associates. Barbin was thrown into the Bastille, and was afterwards sentenced to life imprisonment, a penalty which was indeed remitted a few years later. Richelieu was treated with courtesy, if not with cordiality. He resigned his office and was presently ordered to retire to Luçon; in his own phrase, he was exiled to his bishopric.

There was much justification for Concini's overthrow, and possibly his enemies were right in thinking that assassination was the only means by which his power in the State could be destroyed, but only avarice and blind animosity could explain the cruel treatment inflicted upon his wife. The sudden height to which this Italian serving-woman had risen, the jealousy excited by her elevation, the intrigues of courtiers and politicians in which she was involved, affected the good judgment she once possessed. It was not strange that a woman, naturally ignorant and superstitious, and involved in danger and perplexity, should have sought refuge in incantations and sortilege and similar nonsense, and these things were now made the pretext for her ruin..

No sooner was Concini murdered, than the royal guards made their way to his wife's apartment. She had already heard of the catastrophe, and, hiding in the bed her jewels that were of enormous value, she placed herself upon it. The guards entered the chamber and ransacked it. They found and seized the jewels, and carried the *maréchale* to the Bastille. She had done nothing which deserved any severer penalty than banishment, but Luines and

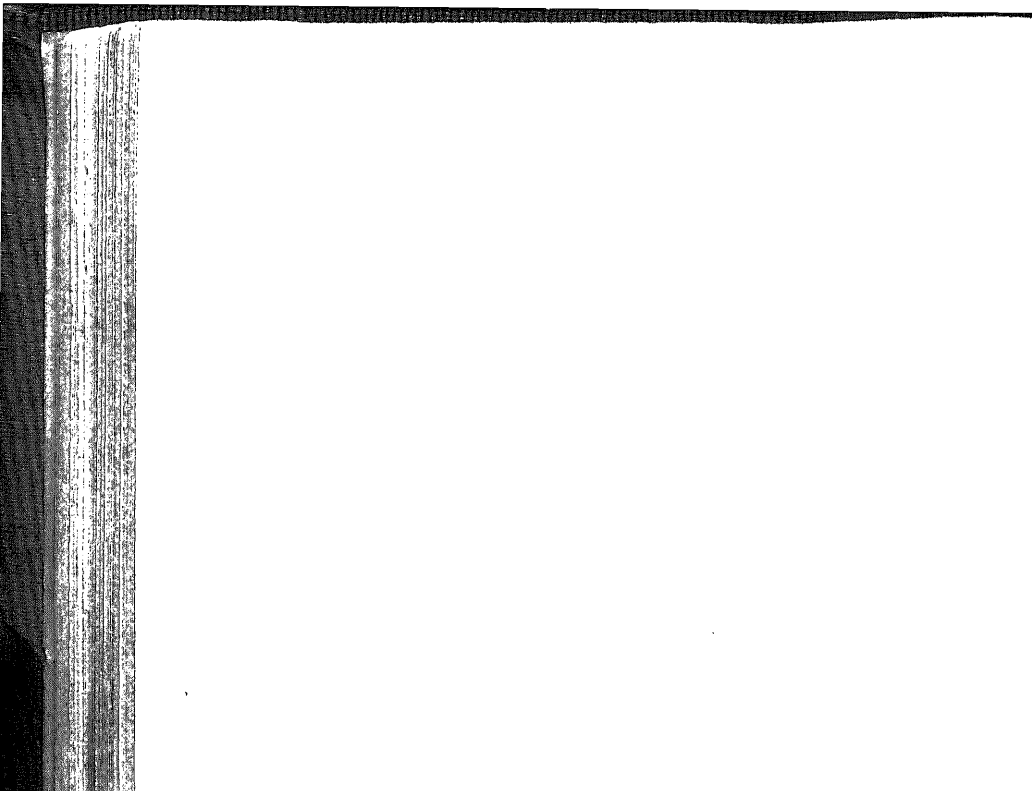
his associates were resolved to have her life and her money. She was tried for being a sorceress, and it was shown that she had a nativity of the King in her possession, that she prepared wax tablets for some secret purpose, had made solemn offering of a cock to some unknown deity, and had consulted with so-called sorcerers and fortune-tellers. Upon such evidence, the Parliament found her guilty of treason against God and King, and sentenced her to be beheaded. She met her fate with courage and resolution. "How many people have gathered to see one unhappy and oppressed woman!" she said, as she was driven through the great crowd to the place of execution.

The property of Concini and his wife was confiscated, but the State gained little by it. Luines obtained the most of it for himself and the rest for his followers. The wealth and honours the Concinis had accumulated during seven years, to the great scandal of the community, were acquired by Luines almost in a day; he was made a duke, and a lieutenant-general, and first gentleman of the chamber, and presently he received the sword of the constable, the highest military rank in France. He had never fought a battle, and the office which had been held by soldiers like Guesclin and Bourbon and Montmorenci was now bestowed on a man whose skill had only been displayed in taming and flying falcons.

The assassination of Concini was followed by the overthrow of those identified with his fortune. When Mary de' Medici heard of the murder, she



LEONORA DORI, WIFE OF CONCINI.



cried: "I have reigned seven years. There is only left for me now a crown in heaven." She was right in saying that her rule in an earthly kingdom was ended. Luines wished to remove the possibility of her exerting any influence over Louis, and this was not difficult. Louis XIII. was a singularly cold character, and he viewed the most of mankind with complete indifference. For some few favourites he showed, indeed, a jealous and capricious fondness, but in that list his mother was not found. Moreover, Mary de' Medici had bestowed on her son little love and less care; in an amiable character, natural affection might have survived neglect, but Louis's character was not amiable.

She sent to the King for information as to her future position. She was told that Louis would always treat her as his mother, but the ominous words were added that, in the future, he wished to be the King. He was obstinate in his refusal to see her, and negotiations were carried on between Richelieu, in her behalf, and Luines, on the part of the monarch. It was at last decided that the Queen-mother should retire to Blois, where she was to be furnished with a suitable establishment but could take no part in the affairs of the State. The mother and son had a farewell interview, but they indulged only in formal courtesies. Louis desired to have his mother out of the way; she did not regret leaving him, and if she regretted leaving power, she was too proud to show it. At the head of a long procession, which was justly likened to a funeral cortège, she drove away from the Louvre. Her rule had been

marked by prodigality, weakness, and bad judgment, and it was now ended forever. In the last of the long line of carriages could be seen the pointed beard and pale face of the Bishop of Luçon; he was involved in the odium which rested on the followers of Concini, and the only place now open to him was that of adviser to a queen in disgrace, the rôle of prime minister in a phantom court. His rapid rise had been followed by what seemed a complete overthrow. But he was a man of rare ability in intrigue; even his enemies acknowledged that in this young bishop was combined an amount of vigour and sagacity not to be found in any of his associates. If the prospect was dark, the events of a few years were to show that it was not hopeless. Seven years from the time that Richelieu left the Louvre, the disgraced follower of a disgraced princess, he returned to it, arrayed in the robes of a cardinal, to assume the position of chief minister of the King.





CHAPTER III

THE YEARS OF DISGRACE

1617-1624

DURING the seven years that followed the assassination of Concini, Richelieu did not play an important part in French politics. He attracted little attention except from those familiar with the intrigues of the Court, and until he was made a cardinal and again received as a member of the ministry, he continued to be, comparatively speaking, an obscure man. We judge his early life from the light thrown upon it by his subsequent career, but until he was nearly forty Richelieu had not achieved any national reputation, and was little known except by those connected with the royal Court or the Court of the exiled Queen. In the contemporary chronicles and memoirs, which were completed before 1621, it is curious to see how little mention is made of the Bishop of Luçon. In some his name does not appear, in others he receives casual mention as a person of secondary importance requiring no special notice. In the *Chronicles of Du*

Tillet, published in 1618, the name of Richelieu does not appear; in *A Decade of History under Louis XIII.* by Le Grain, published in 1619, he is briefly mentioned, and the historian says that he was incapable of filling the office of secretary for foreign affairs; in the *Annals of France*, by Savaron, published in 1621, he is given a brief and rather contemptuous notice.

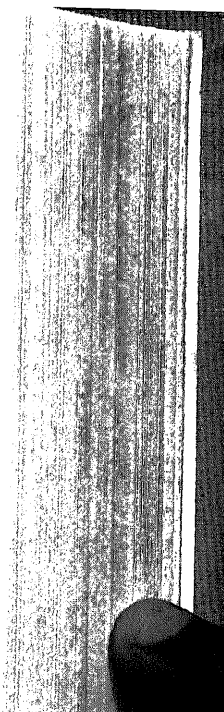
So far as he was known at this time, his reputation was not above reproach. All acknowledged, indeed, that he was a man of ability, but he was believed to be tortuous in his policy, selfish in his purposes, and unscrupulous in his actions; nor was this estimate altogether wrong. No one suspected that the aspiring and intriguing bishop was to become one of the world's great politicians; no one appreciated the breadth of his judgment, or the unswerving courage and resolution with which he would rule the State; his extraordinary qualities could only be displayed when upon him rested the responsibilities of government.

Richelieu retired with the Queen-mother to Blois and was appointed chief of her council. His position was, however, a curiously ambiguous one; if he professed to remain constant to the Queen's fortunes, he lost no opportunity to ingratiate himself with those who enjoyed the King's confidence, and he accepted his new office only on receiving the royal consent. He reported regularly to Luines the condition of affairs at Blois, rendering an exact account of the Queen's actions, in order, as he says, that it might be seen that there was in them nothing to

excite suspicion. "I bind myself to the King," he writes, "to prevent all cabals and plots; not only will I inform him of them, but in time to frustrate them."

Notwithstanding Richelieu's professions of zeal in the royal service, perhaps because they were so profuse, he did not obtain the confidence of Luines or Louis XIII. His character did not excite confidence; the stronger the belief in his ability, the greater was the fear of his double-dealing and the apprehension that he was not a safe person to leave as the Queen's adviser. At all events, he remained, as he himself says, a constant object of calumny and slander.

At last he abandoned his position with the Queen and retired to his bishopric. Though he acted on no formal order of the Court, Luines was well pleased at the retirement of the man whose ability he feared and of whose fidelity he was never sure. Mary de' Medici was both grieved and enraged at his departure. "To send away the Bishop of Luçon," she wrote Luines, "is a proof that I am treated by the King not as a mother, but as a slave." "I beseech you with all my heart," she wrote her son, "do not now refuse the favour you have granted in allowing the Bishop of Luçon to remain with me. Except the prosperity of your reign, there is nothing in the world which I desire so much." Her request was not heeded; Louis wrote to Richelieu commending his retirement to Luçon, where he could perform the duties of his office, exhort his flock, and obey the commands of his God and his



King. It is doubtful if Richelieu found any comfort in such commendation, but he meekly replied, that he had now no care except to pray God for the King's prosperity, and to occupy himself with his books and the duties of his profession.

He affected a philosophy which he did not feel. "I live contentedly in my diocese," he writes, "engaged with my books and the duties of my office. . . . I am resolved to pass my time peaceably among my books and my neighbours; . . . thus I shall be free from calumny."

Though he led a discreet life, avoiding dangerous complications, and writing nothing more compromising than theological dissertations, the pretended recluse had his ear open for any sound which could indicate that he was to be recalled to active political life. But if he thirsted for it he had the good judgment to conceal his eagerness; he was young, he had confidence in his ability and his fortune, and he waited, not patiently, but silently, for his hour to come.

Prudent as was his conduct, it did not satisfy his enemies; they still feared his intrigues with Mary de' Medici, and in April, 1618, he was ordered to leave his diocese and to retire to Avignon in the south of France, far distant from Blois and the Court of the Queen-mother. "The visits and assemblies, the coming and going of divers persons wherever you are, which give offence and cause mistrust in many of our subjects," were, so Richelieu was informed by the King's letter, among the reasons which led to this step. In Avignon, which

was not even in French territory, he was as effectually removed from French politics as if he had been exiled to Rome. The order was alike unexpected and unwelcome, but it was obeyed with the promptitude by which the disgraced minister sought to prove his submission to the King's will. The letter reached him on Wednesday of Holy Week; he did not even wait for the Easter celebration, but on Good Friday started on the long and painful journey to his new place of exile.

Richelieu found occupation in those days of trial by devoting himself to polemical writing, and he published a treatise against the Huguenots. "I will say nothing of it myself," he writes in his memoirs, speaking of his book entitled *A Defence of the Principal Points of the Catholic Faith*, "I leave it to the judgment of those into whose hands it has come." That judgment cannot be an especially favourable one. Richelieu's controversial works were characterised by the dogmatism that is usually found in such productions; probably they pleased zealous partisans; certainly they did not convince opponents, nor do they interest posterity.

His life at Avignon was a melancholy one. Early success had stimulated his ambition, and when he had once tasted the sweets of power, its loss was gall and wormwood. Moreover, there was no certainty that his chance would return; the King looked upon him with distrust, and he could no longer use his position with the Queen-mother to secure his recall to the royal councils. His letters are full of dejection. At times he prepared lengthy memorials which

should justify him in the mind of the King, but, discreetly, he never forwarded them. Silent submission was more apt to secure a return of favour than querulous argument. His health was infirm; in his gloom he thought that death might be near, and prepared his will. It is a curious contrast with the testament that became effective at his death a quarter of a century later. Then he left palaces to the King, dukedoms and millions of money to his nephews; now he disposed of a few thousand livres, the most of which he devoted to the uses of his diocese at Luçon. He gave, also, some farewell advice to his successors in the bishopric, in which he bade them reside in the diocese, visit the flock, and encourage by their example the clergy under their charge. Such were the views of the disappointed politician who expected to close in exile an unsuccessful career.

He did not lack friends who sought his return to favour. The Pope himself asked, not indeed that Richelieu should be restored to office, but that he should not, by exile to a foreign city, be prevented from attending to the needs of his flock. "If M. de Luçon had been content to be a good bishop in his diocese," was the curt reply, "he would not be where he is."

While the bishop sought consolation for the loss of office in exposing the manifold errors of Calvinistic theology, the Queen-mother remained at Blois, discontented with her lot, and constantly quarrelling with those who were in favour with the King. These disputes were not very important, but the

Queen's ill-humour at last led her to take a decided step. If she was not kept in actual captivity at Blois, she was under strict surveillance, and of this she resolved to rid herself. Plans of resistance were concocted with discontented noblemen, of whom there was always a plentiful supply, and in February, 1619, accompanied only by her maid, she escaped out of a window at some peril of her life, and made her way to Loches, where she joined the powerful and unruly Duke of Épernon.

This escapade brought Richelieu once again into the political field. He had conducted himself with great circumspection during his year's stay at Avignon, avoiding any compromising intimacy with suspected intriguers, and devoting himself zealously to polemical treatises, as a faithful servant of God and the King. His prudence now met its reward; from the depths of gloom in which he was plunged, he was suddenly called back to the field of intrigue and ambition that was so dear to him. Luines realised that Mary de' Medici was more apt to involve the kingdom in confusion with the reckless advisers by whom she was now surrounded, than if she were counselled by Richelieu. He might be designing and double-dealing, but at least he was sagacious, and he knew that both his own interests and those of the Queen would be advanced by a discreet policy. Father Joseph was already his friend, and was among those who declared that it was the part of wisdom to recall him from exile. Such counsels were now received favourably, and a brother of the Capuchin was despatched to Avignon, with an amiable letter

from the King, bidding Richelieu forthwith to rejoin the Queen-mother and resume his position as her adviser. He did not need to be twice bidden; on March 7, 1619, the messenger of good tidings arrived at Avignon; on the following day, though the weather was of unusual severity, the ground covered with snow, the roads almost impassable, and the country infested by lawless marauders, Richelieu started to rejoin Mary de' Medici. After nineteen days of hardship, he met the Queen-mother at Angoulême. His political life was resumed, and was to continue with ever-increasing success and glory.

It was thought that Richelieu's eagerness for a return to favour would make him a prudent counselor, and this expectation was not disappointed. But, in fact, neither the Queen-mother nor her followers were in any condition to resist the royal army, and Richelieu wisely advised her to make terms. Luines was quite ready to grant her anything but a restoration to power, and, accordingly, she received the government of Anjou, and her followers were rewarded in proportion to their ability to be troublesome.

The statesman who was to incur the bitterest enmity of Mary de' Medici was now her chosen adviser; his counsels were judicious, and probably she could have had no better, though he never forgot the prospect of his own advancement in the policy which he dictated to the Queen. It is not important to trace the complications that were constantly arising between the King and the Queen-mother. Once or twice she went so far as to take

up arms against her son, though always under the pretext of seeking his advantage by driving away evil counsellors. None of these movements were of any importance, and they were soon terminated by new treaties and new promises that were rarely observed on either side.

Richelieu was firmly entrenched in the Queen's good-will, and whether her favourites were Italian adventurers or French bishops, she was always ready to do her utmost to advance their interests. It had been very vaguely hinted in 1619 that Richelieu should receive the royal nomination to a cardinalate, and, subsequently, Louis wrote to Paul V. asking that the Archbishop of Toulouse and the Bishop of Luçon might receive that dignity. It was the recognised usage of the papal Court to appoint a certain number of cardinals at the request of great Catholic powers like Spain and France, and the royal nomination, unless revoked, was almost certain in time to procure the desired honour. But promotion often came slowly, even when the representatives of the King were earnest in their demands, and it was not always the case that a formal nomination was urged with much zeal. This was undoubtedly the trouble with Richelieu's candidacy. The nomination was made, and there the matter rested. At the end of another brief insurrection, in 1620, his promotion was made one of the conditions granted the Queen-mother, and the King at her request sent a letter of recommendation. Probably Louis himself was willing that Richelieu should become a cardinal, but his advisers thought otherwise. Between

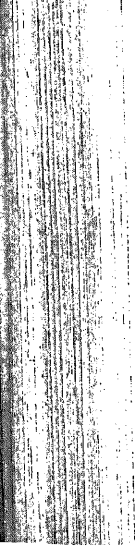
Richelieu and Luines there was some formal pretence of friendship, but the King's favourite distrusted both the capacity and the character of the ambitious bishop, and had no desire to see his influence increased by the great dignity of the cardinalate. Richelieu was ungrateful to him, so he told the papal nuncio, and he desired that his promotion should be indefinitely postponed. Even in this expression of his wish the favourite showed his fear of the aspiring bishop; he insisted on profound secrecy, and said that Richelieu would at once stir up new insurrections if he suspected opposition to his advancement. After Luines's death, Louis told Richelieu that probably he would never have received a cardinal's hat had the constable lived. It is most unlikely that he would have received the promotion if Luines had both lived and continued in power, but it is doubtful if a man of no more ability than the royal falconer could permanently have kept out of office a person of Richelieu's skill in intrigue.

Luines held his power until his death, yet it is not sure, had his life been spared, that he could have much longer retained it. His favour was less odious to the community than that of Concini, but the difference was chiefly due to the fact that one was a foreigner and the other a Frenchman. In eagerness for gain, Luines in no way yielded to his predecessor; in a few years he accumulated an enormous estate, and he founded one of the great families of the French nobility. However successful in heaping on himself honours and wealth, he was a man of



DUKE OF LUYNES, CONSTABLE OF FRANCE.

FROM A PAINTING BY HUBERT FLEURY.



very moderate capacity, and some of his defects excited the contempt of his master. Louis XIII. inherited the martial tastes of his ancestors, and was well versed in the details of warfare; not fitted, perhaps, to plan a campaign, had he been an officer he would have seen that his regiment was carefully drilled and well equipped; if he had not been a king, he would have made an excellent lieutenant of infantry.

Luines, on the other hand, was unfamiliar with military affairs. When the Huguenots took up arms, Luines, with his new dignity of constable, undertook the command of the army that marched against them. But his inexperience was sneered at even by the common soldiers, and it was not certain that he possessed the personal bravery that might have atoned for lack of technical skill. Louis's disposition was jealous, and he was already discontented at the power and wealth to which the favourite had attained, even though he had himself bestowed them; he was a good soldier, and his contempt was excited by Luines's failure as a general.

The favourite avoided the danger of overthrow by an early death. Though he kept out of the way of bullets during the campaign, he could not escape the exposures of service in the field. He was attacked by fever, and on December 14, 1621, he died. His death left the way open for Richelieu's advancement. Paul V. knew that the promotion of the Bishop of Luçon would not be regarded as a boon by Louis's favourite, and the papacy rarely neglected excuses for delay. The cardinalate was a great

honour, and the contest for it could be utilised by the Pope; when once it was bestowed, of many zealous supplicants there would only remain one ingrate. But after Luines's death, the French representatives demanded Richelieu's promotion of the new Pope in a manner which showed that they were at last in earnest, and it was not long delayed. On September 5, 1622, the elevation of the Bishop of Luçon to the cardinalate was announced by Pope Gregory XV. Richelieu was only thirty-eight when he received the highest honour, except the papacy, which the Church could bestow, and his early promotion was due, not to any great distinction which he had won in Church or State, but to the skill with which he had ingratiated himself into the confidence, the good-will, perhaps even the affection, of Mary de' Medici.

His newly acquired rank as Cardinal rendered his political advancement more easy. He had been regarded as an adroit and able man, but in addition to this he was now a prince of the Church. His position gave him rank, entitled him to a precedence, such as were enjoyed by few even of the greatest dignitaries. A man possessing the power and immunities of a Roman cardinal was a formidable candidate for political position, and with Richelieu the dignity of the cardinalate, like the lesser dignity of the bishopric of Luçon, was chiefly valuable because it was a stepping-stone for his political ambition.

He soon resigned his bishopric. He was now too great a man to disquiet himself about the affairs of



RICHELIEU IN CARDINAL'S HAT.
FROM THE PORTRAIT BY MICHEL LAGNE.
Reproduced from Hanotaux's "Histoire du Cardinal de Richelieu."

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an obscure diocese; he wrote to the members of the chapter, thanking them for their conduct toward him in the past and resigning his office as their chief pastor. His entire attention was given to securing the place in the royal council from which he had been driven five years before. The position in Louis's confidence which had been held by Luines remained for some time unoccupied; the charge of the Government was intrusted to the Prince of Condé and to others of less note, but among them there was no one who possessed the ability to rule the State. Richelieu, in the meantime, continued to be the Queen-mother's chief adviser, while endeavouring in every way to gain the confidence of the King. In 1621, when the campaign was progressing against the Huguenots, he wrote to an acquaintance, bidding him not to forget those who had no friends but their breviary and their books, and could only pray God for the success and glory of the Church and State. Richelieu's attention was never wholly given to his prayers or his breviary, and as little now as at any other part of his career. Years after, Louis, in one of his fits of petulance, complained that Richelieu held many benefices, but did not read his breviary. If he read it at all, he found time for other occupations.

After the death of Luines, the relations of the King with his mother became more friendly. She lived at the Luxembourg, and her influence over her son, if not entirely restored, was again very considerable. Richelieu was her trusted adviser,

and she believed that his restoration to office would secure for her a paramount influence in the affairs of the State. There was no one who developed sufficient ability to block the road of the aspiring Cardinal; the ministry was composed of men below mediocrity, united only in jealousy of Richelieu and a strong desire to keep the adviser of the Queen-mother from obtaining a place in the King's council. But if they had the desire to hinder Richelieu's ambition, they had not the ability. The leader in the council was La Vieuville, the superintendent of finance, a man of small capacity and of questionable honesty. He soon despaired of holding his position unaided, and sought to secure the good-will of Mary de' Medici by opening the door of the council-chamber for the return of Richelieu. Apparently, he expected to have the benefit of the Cardinal's resolution and sagacity and yet himself hold the chief place, and such a hope illustrates how little Richelieu's character was as yet understood.

The King, who afterwards supported the Cardinal so long and faithfully, was very unwilling to intrust him with office; he did not like the man, and he still associated him with the followers of Concini, all of whom he had held in aversion. "There is a man who would like to be in my council," he said, as Richelieu passed by, "but I cannot bring myself to that step after all he has done against me." "I know him better than you," he said to Mary de' Medici; "he is a man of inordinate ambition." But the King did not withstand the requests of his minister, reinforced by the solicitations of his

mother. If we can confide in Richelieu's memoirs, he sought to be excused when the offer was made him; he declared that even if God had granted him certain qualities of mind, they were accompanied by such weakness of body that he could not be of service amid the noise and disorder of the world; he preferred the position of an occasional counsellor, to the laborious task of one charged with the duties of office. His excuses, he tells us, were not received, and certainly they were not intended to be; in April, 1624, he again became one of the ministers of Louis XIII.

La Vieuville not only found Richelieu willing to accept the burdens of office, but he soon discovered that in any ministry of which the Cardinal formed a part, he was sure to be the head. In August, 1624, La Vieuville was arrested on the charge of corruption in office, a charge probably well founded, and he was confined in the château of Amboise. Richelieu became the head of the council; his associates, during all his career, were merely assistants to do his bidding; his will was absolute and uncontrolled, and the other members of the ministry did not presume to question it. He would brook no division of authority; he was chief minister and practically sole minister for over eighteen years, and the power which he had so long desired and for which he had so indefatigably laboured was never to be wrested from his grasp.

Richelieu's continuance in power was in a great measure due to his fitness to exercise it, but if he had relied on that alone he would not have died

prime minister. A statesman in those days did not owe his position to the public; he was not at the mercy of popular caprice; public opinion had little means of expression, and most of the community regarded affairs of State as something far removed from them, with which they had no concern. But at any moment Richelieu could be dismissed from office by his royal master, and in Louis XIII. he had to deal with a man of jealous and capricious character. The King was by no means a *fainéant* monarch, he was not absorbed in pleasure, he was not indifferent to the concerns of the State of which he was the head. He was, moreover, jealous of the power that was exercised by his own servants, prone to be displeased, ready to believe evil of those in whose hands authority was placed. "Your Majesty," said the minister to his sovereign, "is extremely suspicious, jealous, susceptible to passing aversions, and to variable humours and inclinations."

This was true, but it was also true that Louis could appreciate the qualities of a great man, and subdue his own petulant jealousies and dislikes when he felt that such a course was for the interest of the kingdom. Not an able man himself, he was unshaken in his support of those who were fit to guide the State. Richelieu would soon have been driven from power by the cabals of countless enemies if he
✓ had not accomplished great things. The influence
✓ which France exerted in Europe under his rule, the
strength of the administrative system which he
x created, the internal good order which he enforced,



LOUIS XIII.

were acceptable to the sovereign. Often, indeed, in moments of weakness, he promised the overthrow of the minister, but Richelieu's influence was always strong enough to turn Louis from such a purpose. The King's mother, wife, and brother, the women whom he regarded with affection, the courtiers whom he viewed with favour, the confessors to whom he confided the secrets of his soul, all united in desiring the overthrow of the imperious Cardinal, and Louis had for him no feeling of personal liking; and yet during nineteen years they were unable to procure from the King the dismissal of his minister. Priests denounced him as a faithless son of the Church who espoused the cause of heretical princes; courtiers declaimed against the man who sought to humble a proud nobility and sent members of the noblest French families to the block; women prayed to be delivered from this cold and merciless tyrant, but the King was faithful to him to the end. It showed the power which a strong nature could exercise upon a weaker one, and it showed also the untiring attention with which the minister watched the foibles and the weaknesses of his master. If he was resolved to exercise an absolute control, he had the art to conceal it. He constantly consulted with the King; he declared himself to be only the King's shadow, the exponent of his desires, the executor of his purposes. He did not even neglect the matter of keeping his master constantly in view. Where the King was, there was the servant; if Louis went to war, Richelieu attended him; if he went from one palace or hunting-lodge to another in search of

pleasure, the minister followed also. Louis's character was not altogether a weak one, but it had its limitations. If Richelieu had ever left the King for six months, surrounded by his enemies, without himself being present to reply to them, his disgrace would have been certain, but he was never guilty of such carelessness.





CHAPTER IV

THE OVERTHROW OF THE HUGUENOT PARTY

1624-1629

THE problems which confronted the new minister were many and serious, and he has fairly stated them in the testament in which he reviewed the results of his long administration.

"When your Majesty called me to your councils, I can truly say that the Huguenots divided the State with you; the nobles conducted themselves as if they were not subjects, and the governors of provinces as if they were independent sovereigns. Foreign alliances were despised, private interests preferred to public, and the dignity of your Majesty so abased it could hardly be recognised. I promised your Majesty to use all my industry and power to ruin the Huguenot party, lower the pride of the nobles, lead all subjects to their duty, and restore the country's name among foreign nations."

He could justly claim that his promise was fully executed.

While the Queen-mother did much to hasten Richelieu's promotion, an influential coterie had

it rendered it impossible for France to exert her full strength; it left the State crippled by the constant recurrence of internal disturbance. It was Richelieu's firm resolve that the anarchy of misrule should be succeeded by the order of a vigorous Government, that he would have peace at home, that the soil of France should not be devastated by civil war, and that both prince and Protestant should in the future yield an unhesitating obedience to the commands of the central authority.

Of the problems he had to meet, none was more serious than the proper treatment of the Huguenot party. During the sixteenth century, dissent from the Catholic Church had spread in France with the same rapidity as in many parts of Europe. It was in the southern portions of the kingdom that the reformed faith made the greatest progress. Whether the tendency to new doctrines which had developed in the former dominions of the counts of Toulouse still remained in the population of Southern France, whether dissent found a soil prepared for it in the descendants of Albigenses and Troubadours, and flourished among the sunny fields and olive trees of Languedoc and Provence, the adherents of the new creed in many districts were in the majority. Dissent existed in the north as well as in the south, but in the northern provinces the bulk of the population was Catholic.

Though the great majority of the French people remained constant to their traditional faith, the House of Navarre was Protestant, and the accession of Henry IV. to the throne excited in the Protestant

party the hope that it might become the dominant power in the State. That judicious monarch preferred peace and an unquestioned title to the tenets of any theological system, and his renunciation of Calvinism discouraged the ambitious hopes of his followers.

An element of large importance in the growth of Protestantism in France had been the extent to which the nobility abandoned the ancient creed. It was probably political ambition rather than any deep study of the Fathers that accounted for their change of belief. There was not indeed in France the opportunity to appropriate lands of the Church which led German princes into the paths of heresy, but many a French noble, disappointed in his hopes and discontented with the Court, rallied to the support of a new party that furnished not only theological truth, but opportunities for turbulence.

The accession of these noble allies was originally a source of strength, but in time it became an element of weakness. Such leaders were ready to draw the Protestants into insurrections which had no motive but their own ambition, and the Huguenot party became an unruly political organisation. During the wars of religion they were banded together for the defence of their lives and their religion, but they clung to the measures that had been necessary for their protection in the days of the League and the Guises, when the necessity for them no longer existed. Though Henry IV. abjured the creed of his youth, he was not unmindful of his faithful followers: by the Edict of Nantes he secured for them

the exercise of their religion in those parts of France in which it was actually established; they were allowed to worship God and pursue their avocations without unreasonable hindrance. With this, the Huguenots might well have been content, and by a discreet conduct they might possibly have averted the persecutions which they suffered under Louis XIV. and his successors.

The Edict of Nantes was confirmed after Henry's death, and its provisions were carried out with reasonable good faith. Such a measure of toleration from a dominant creed was rare in those days. In England, a Catholic could observe the usages of his faith only in secret and in peril of his life; in almost every part of Europe, whether Catholic or Protestant, it was required that the religion of the King should be the religion of his subjects. Nor had the principles of toleration as yet entered deeply into the French mind; if the Edict of Nantes was respected as a necessity, it was not viewed with favour by most Catholics. The Huguenots were at times subjected to the annoyances that are inevitable when a minority practises a faith that is distasteful to the majority of the population. The rights secured by the Edict were grudgingly accorded; a zealous priest would sometimes seek to convert Huguenot heretics by questionable methods; a fanatical mob would sometimes disturb Huguenot rites by open violence. Yet there was no effort to revoke the Edict, and no interference on the part of the Government with the rights which it secured.

But the conduct of the Huguenots was not such

as to obtain the favour of a Government which, at best, looked upon them with suspicion. They had long been in possession of a considerable number of fortified towns, mostly in Southern France; by the Edict these were left in their charge, and they were also allowed, with the permission of the King, to continue the synods and assemblies in which they had been wont to discuss affairs of both Church and State. In the years following the death of Henry IV., the Protestants held several of those assemblies, usually without the permission of the Government, and they preserved and sought to perfect their military and political organisation. The territory, in which they were strong, was divided into circles, the command of each of which was given to some powerful noble, and preparations were made for levying and equipping troops, and for raising money to carry on war in case of need. Naturally the aid of such an organisation was sought by anyone in insurrection against the Government; their assistance was solicited by Condé and by the Queen-mother in their troubles, and the Huguenots showed a readiness to take part in quarrels in which the defence of their faith was in no wise involved.

It was impossible that the existence of a great religious party, holding its separate councils, in which not only questions of theology were discussed, the principles of Calvin and the iniquities of the papacy, but in which matters of state were considered, preparations made for war, and armies levied, should fail to excite the jealousy and ill-will of any Government. If this was not a state within a state,

it was something very like it, and it was certain that when a man like Richelieu was at the helm, either the Protestants must secure a practical independence by force, or accept their lot with other citizens, be subject to the same laws, and surrender any pretence of a separate political organisation.

The Huguenots had several times taken up arms since the death of Henry IV., usually, though not always, on the plea of some violated privilege. They wished to worship God according to their own conscience, but they wished also to preserve their political position, to hold their cities of defence, to be able to raise and equip armies, and to declare war if they deemed it expedient. Even if entire freedom of conscience were cheerfully granted, the existence of a powerful and unruly element was distasteful to all who believed that a strong Government was required for the development of the State, and it was inconsistent with the conceptions that were the basis of Richelieu's policy.

In the later years of Luines's rule, the King was at war with his Protestant subjects, a war brought on in part by Luines's maladroit bigotry, in part by the readiness of the Huguenots to accept a quarrel and leave it to the issue of arms. When Richelieu became prime minister, it was soon evident that his policy was not to be governed by considerations of religion; he allied himself with Protestant cantons, he expelled the papal troops, and made war upon Spain. He did not expect to be embarrassed by the Huguenots when he was carrying on war in defence of their religious brethren. Yet hardly had

Richelieu resolved to interfere in behalf of the Grisons, when some of the Huguenot leaders were again in revolt, and their action was supported by the city of La Rochelle, the stronghold of the Huguenot party. They were most ill-advised in choosing this time for stirring up insurrection. Richelieu was convinced, and justly convinced, that France could not hold a position of leadership in European politics until internal tranquillity was assured; he could not carry on war with Spain and Germany when it was possible that his troops might, at any time, be withdrawn to enforce order in Languedoc and Provence. He patched up a hasty peace both with Spain and with the Huguenots, but it needed no prophet to see that the so-called peace was only a temporary truce. The Cardinal declared that it was necessary to wait the time when he could reduce the Huguenots to the obedience in which all subjects of the King should dwell. The opportunity was not long deferred. It was early in 1626 that articles of pacification were signed between the King and the people of La Rochelle. In the following year, the great struggle began in which the political power of the Huguenots in France was for ever overthrown.

The terms of peace to which Richelieu consented were distasteful to all parties. The Cardinal was resolved to destroy the military power of the Huguenot party, and reluctantly postponed the effort. On the other hand, the Protestants had many grievances: the people of La Rochelle demanded the demolition of the strong fortress of St. Louis, which

was a perpetual menace to their town; the inhabitants of Béarn bore with impatience the presence of Catholic priests, which, though secured by the Edict of Nantes, had only recently been enforced by the Government; the dismantling of many fortified towns was a source of bitterness to eager religionists who believed that the safety of their faith could only be secured by practical independence of a Catholic sovereign. Between the Government and the Huguenot party there was an irrepressible conflict, but the final struggle was precipitated by the weak ambition of a trifler.

In 1624, Charles I. married Henrietta of France, a sister of Louis XIII. The French hoped that this alliance would not only promote amity between their country and England, but would secure some indulgence for persecuted Catholics. In both anticipations they were disappointed. The alliance was followed by constant bickerings over the non-observance of some of the conditions of the marriage contract. The French complained that the servants of Henrietta were dismissed, that she was harshly treated, and that the lot of the English Catholics became worse instead of better. The English replied that the French had failed to perform the conditions of the marriage agreement, that the Huguenots were ill-treated, and that Richelieu's foreign policy was tricky and deceitful.

The Duke of Buckingham was then at the height of his favour, and he had been sent to Paris to receive the French bride in his master's behalf. In a Court accustomed to magnificent display, Bucking-

ham excited attention by the gorgeousness of his dress, the charm of his manner, and the prodigality with which he threw away his money. The gossips declared that this handsome cavalier aroused a strong interest in the French Queen, Anne of Austria, and he was vain and indiscreet enough to complicate the relations of the two countries by a gallantry that was distasteful to the French King. Anne wasted no love on her husband, who not only wasted no love on her, but was singularly unfitted to excite affection even if he had desired it. Doubtless she was pleased by Buckingham's devotion, and this was quite enough to make it displeasing to the King and the Cardinal. When Buckingham again wished to visit Paris, he was informed that he would be a *persona non grata*. The Duke did not incite war merely to gratify a foolish pique, though unquestionably this had some influence on his action. But the relations between the two powers were fast drifting into open war: English cruisers under various pretexts seized French ships and made prizes of them; the English King complained of the treatment the Huguenots received from Louis, and charged the French King with failing to keep his promises. Buckingham knew that a war in behalf of their French co-religionists would be popular among the English; he hoped to gain for himself the glory of defeating England's traditional enemies, and, in July, 1627, at the head of a large fleet, he sailed to La Rochelle.

The avowed motives of this expedition were to procure for the Huguenots the rights to which they

were entitled, and to secure for the people of La Rochelle the destruction of the fortress of St. Louis, which they had long demanded. The English at once effected a landing on the island of Ré, which lay outside the harbour of La Rochelle, and began the siege of the fort of St. Martin. If Buckingham had conducted his campaign with vigour and intelligence, he could speedily have captured the fort and obtained entire possession of the island. He could then have kept up communications with La Rochelle on the mainland, and it would have been almost impossible for the French to drive him from his position, or force the city to surrender. But a contest in which Buckingham and Richelieu were the respective leaders was a very unequal one. No sooner was it known that the English had effected a landing than the Cardinal showed what could be accomplished by indomitable resolution. While the English proceeded leisurely with the siege, all was activity on the part of the French. Louis was sick, and they hesitated to inform him of this unexpected declaration of war, lest anxiety should aggravate his malady. But the real king did not wait for the recovery of the nominal King: he quickly collected an army and sent it to the relief of the French besieged in St. Martin; he gathered supplies, and offered great rewards to those who would convey them to the fort; he pledged his own money and credit to those who were unwilling to trust the slow and uncertain payment that often awaited the creditors of the State.

When Richelieu assumed power, there was no

French navy in existence. He had borrowed the ships of England and of Holland in the early struggles in which he was engaged; he now sought the assistance of the Dutch and Spanish in his conflict with England. But the Dutch were loath to give any assistance in a contest that was really waged against their Protestant brethren in France. The Spanish had indeed no sympathy with heresy, but their hatred of heretics was much weaker than their jealousy of the French. They sent a fleet to La Rochelle, nominally to assist their French allies. The Marquis of Spinosa visited the French camp and was received with great honours, but all this amounted to nothing, and the Spanish fleet presently sailed back to Spain, leaving Louis to subdue his Huguenot rebels as best he could. "They have," said Richelieu, in his rage, "God and the Virgin in their mouths, their beads in their hands, but only their own temporal interests in their hearts."

Practically the English were in command of the sea, and they kept so close a watch over Fort St. Martin that Buckingham boasted that only the birds of heaven could reach it. The boast was not verified. "God willed the matter otherwise," the Cardinal piously remarked, but he might have attributed the result to his own exertions.

The English ships watched the Channel, and they also erected a barricade, which it was hoped would prevent the passage of any boats coming to the relief of the besieged. These precautions were in vain; the Cardinal inspired the French soldiers with his own zeal, and the hope of wealth, as well